



60TH ANNIVERSARY

EST - 1963

CLUB | TEAM | PLAYER FOR 60 YEARS

2023 YEARBOOK



60TH ANNIVERSARY

EST - 1963



HILLS BULLS

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A MESSAGE FROM MICHAEL GREMMO

Pride is the first thing that comes to mind as we reflect on the last decade and the 60 years of the Mighty Bulls history.

For 60 years we have been a club that is inclusive and provides the opportunity for any child, young man, or woman, irrespective of ability or background to learn the game, play the game and love the game.

The last 10 years has seen the Hills Bulls Sports Club develop into the largest Rugby League club in the Parramatta District and with our combined sports one of the largest Rugby League clubs in the world. In 2022 the Mighty Bulls had one of the best years in our history winning every major award in the Parramatta District taking out Coach of the Year, Modified Incentive Shield, Junior Incentive Shield, Club of the Year, and the Club Championship.

Playing in the Ron Massey Cup two levels under the NRL and the highest level of sport in the Hills District which in itself is a huge achievement. However, 2022 we had the honour to win the Ron Massey Cup which is an incredible feat and great honour for the Mighty Bulls.

In 2023 we had growth in all areas, and it is great to see the Bulls Inaugural All Abilities team and our Inaugural Women's "A" Grade. It was always going to be hard to repeat such performances as 2022 and if the Parramatta criteria remained the same, we would have again won the Modified Incentive Shield, Junior Incentive Shield, and the Club Championship.

2023 our young Sydney Shield team won the Premiership against all odds beating St. Marys who have only lost a few games in the last 6 years.

Oztag like all our sports has had incredible growth with over 4500 registered players and our Bulls Oztag winning the 2023 NSW State Cup which is a rewarding result. Many of our Bulls players went on to further represent at the Oztag Nationals where 13 out of 18 teams made the Grand final with 12 teams becoming Premiers. 2023 also saw 18 Bulls making the Australian teams capping off a dominating year for the Hills Bulls.

We are in the strongest financial position in our 60 years history which has allowed us to commence the Gym at Crestwood whilst the Community Centre will also re-commence in 2024.

We would like to thank our life members, sponsors, committee members, coaches, managers, trainers, parents, players, all members both past and parents for making the Hills Bulls Sports Club the Envy of many and the great club we are today.

BEST WISHES
MICK GREMMO
PRESEDENT
HILLS BULLS

Mick Gremmo



LETTER FOR HILLS BULLS 60TH ANNIVERSARY.

Congratulations to the Hills Bulls on their 60th anniversary.

Actron Air has been a proud sponsor for the Hills Bulls Rugby League since 2017.

The Hills District is where Actron Air started manufacturing air conditioners back in 1984. In that time, we have seen the Hills area change and grow, which in turn has increased and shaped the Bulls into the successful powerhouse they are today.

We have many friends and family playing rugby league and Oz tag at the club and we enjoy the community spirit the competition signifies.

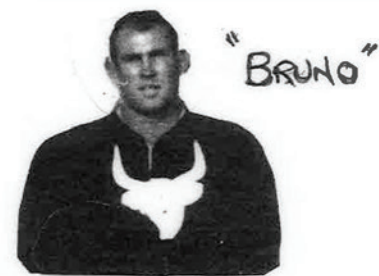
It's great to see the Bulls doing so well in so many grades, especially last season with the Sydney Shield Team making it to the finals, and the Ron Massey Team winning the premiership for the first time, well done to everyone.

Thanks for the great support from the Hills Bulls Rugby League community along with Griffin Air making this sponsorship a true partnership that feels like you're working with family.

Sponsoring the Bulls has been a great privilege, and we look forward to the partnership continuing over the years to come.

BEST REGARDS
ROBERT MUNDY
DIRECTOR
ACTRON AIR

R Mundy



HILLS FOUNDATION PLAYERS

K. Woellner (President)
P. Evenden
J. Reardon
J. Marshall
J. Gates
T. Ferguson
C. Wilkinson
A. Reid (Manager)
D. Paul
B. Harris
G. Savage
J. Bright
B. Bates
W. Brien
M. Gremmo
K. Woellner (C)
B. Tyler (Coach)
S. Napper
M. Nicholas
W. Walters

BY MICK GREMMO (SNR), PHIL EVENDEN AND COL WILKINSON

With a view to obtaining consensus on observed changes in the way both Rugby League and the way the Hills Bulls have changed with the times since the playing days of Hills foundation players and members of the first premiership won in 1965 (the second year of our existence), Michael Gremmo senior, Col Wilkinson and Phill Evenden, over a home cooked baked dinner, threw their observations on the table and came up with the following commentary.

The speed of the game is much faster despite the fact we played under a three-yards (roughly a three metres) rule, ruck play is so fast today

that forwards are always under pressure to wrong foot or break the opposition.

We considered that skills have not changed that much over the years. It is more the size and fitness of players these days which make the game exciting and tougher.

Teams are coached today to be much more structured. In our day we played to a game plan which was based around players with flair to create a gap in the opposition. Planned moves were set for all over the paddock.

"Paddock" was an appropriate name for some fields. Our original home ground was the Castle Hill Showground which was used for the Easter Show, pony training and show jumping. We had to conduct an "emu bob" of the field before a game to pick up

horseshoes, nails and horse droppings.

Coaching in the 60s was usually done by a local friend who was talked into coaching and did the job without any remuneration or approved qualifications. All three of us coached teams for the Bulls without having to sit an exam or show any qualification, except our playing skills.

The Bulls night training facilities are fantastic by comparison to 1964-68. We trained on Yattenden Oval with a single light plugged into a neighbour's laundry power point.

In the early years we only had A grade, A Reserve grade, C grade and D Grade.

This meant we were limited in our ability to acquire new players to the club. This also meant our ability to attract funding was very limited. Chook raffles, 500 Clubs, anonymous



sponsors and hard work kept the club afloat. After a few years the two senior grade coaches were paid a nominal fee. Today the committee is to be congratulated for the hard work they have undertaken to have such a broad list of sponsors. The communication and player acknowledgement to sponsors must be exceptional to retain and raise the funds necessary to keep the modern club afloat.

Communication. In the pre-internet and mobile phone era it was very difficult to keep players well informed. A club news sheet was developed after a few years. But we relied on ringing people at home or at work to notify them of changes. This usually fell to the coach or his manager to carry out. Today, your website, mobile phones or emails have made communication relatively easy.

Record Keeping. Sadly we did not keep records of players or results for several years after the club was formed. As a result there are no records of point scorers, number of

games or team and player achievements held. After playing for up to 10 years none of us know how many games we played. In the first two years we started out in C grade, backed up to play in reserve grade and on a few occasions were asked to sit on the sideline for A grade. We loved it! But on a wet and windy winter's day, we froze as there was no shelter or gear to keep us warm. There were also no showers at the Showground.

Footwear. In the early days football boots for forwards came up to cover their ankles and the studs were made of metal and were nailed on.

Conclusion. We are glad we played in the 60-70s. Mick was a very mobile centre. Col started out as a three-quarter and, after a broken leg, moved into the forwards. Phil started out as lock and moved to the second row with Col. None of us would have weighed more than 85kgs.

One thing that all clubs experience is a few dissenters. No matter what great results

a club achieves, sadly, someone won't be happy. We ask those people to realise that the committee is dedicated to creating success for the members. For those who are unhappy over some issue, speak to a committeeman. They will either explain the reason for a particular decision or take your concern to the committee to discuss. Democracy will be applied to agree or deny your concern. That's the way democracy works and it is heaps better than a dictatorship. Be Happy!

The club's results in 2022 were phenomenal and are a huge credit to the committee, the players and the supporters who are also a vital component of every successful club.

The club was formed to allow kids in the area to play rugby league for a local club and to allow them to enjoy playing with their mates. Mick Gremmo remembers knocking on doors to ask parents if their son would like to play rugby league with their mates. This would keep them off the streets and keep them

out of trouble and prepare them for life. This approach worked as the district lacked facilities for sport outside of their schools. Sixty years later this approach proves its success.

Mick, Col and Phill attended the meeting that decided to form this great club back in 1963 and we remain proud that we still have an association with it 60 years later. We are also proud of every player who has made the commitment to lace on the boots and "have a go".

We wish you all success in the years ahead.





CHAPTER 1 **LOOKING BACK**

HILLS DISTRICT JRLFC 60TH ANNIVERSARY

THE BULLS' FIRST 50 YEARS

Since the first half-century of Hills Bulls' existence was extensively documented in a book written for the club by experienced journalist Greg Prichard, much has happened in the continual evolution of what now falls under the umbrella of Hills Bulls Sports club.

There has been large diversification into non-tackle forms of footy, women have become more involved in female rugby league and continue to have a large participation in touch football and Oztag. Crestwood Reserve has had an extension of facilities and playing fields. The Holy Grail of the self-funded semi-professional sector of the club, Ron Massey

Cup and Sydney Shield grand finals victories, has been achieved. The professionally run organisation of an entity that now encompasses 5000 participants across five forms of footy has evolved and its standards keep rising.

Yet amongst all this, the values of what good men in the then yet to be developed region of the 'Hills District' in the 60s and 70s were at pains to measure up to, have not decayed. There have been challenges, like at any club, disagreements, changes of directions and heartache, but at the core have been generations of families that have endured the six decades and the interlocking friendships with other families that remain strong today.

They are encapsulated in the club's current mantra – Club, Team, Player – and the often-used term to

describe the stability and sense of loyalty that is so enshrined in the club's being – Once a Bull, Always a Bull. And while the high-flying Sydney Roosters might promote its fanatical NRL fans group as the 'Chook Pen', on a local level, Crestwood Reserve's 'Bull Pit' is just as devoted.

The journey has been a rich one since a meeting at the Bull and Bush Hotel at Baulkham Hills by unhappy Baulkham Hills rugby union players, who had won their under-18s competition earlier in 1963 but were little celebrated by their club, tossed around with their family members the option of forming their own team, playing rugby league instead.

With the support of their parents, momentum gathered after a public meeting at Baulkham Hills School of Arts on Windsor Road.



Among those present, many of whom became influential and long servants of the club, were Mick Gremmo, Ray Buckley, Ron Drought, Keith Woellner snr and Keith jnr, Col and Roy Wilkinson, Andy Reid, Peter Norman, George Johnston, Merv Sherwood, Bill Heath, Phil and Ken Evenden, Billy Walters, Kevin Franks, Len Reeves, David Paul, Les Hourigan, John Tangy and Ken Dixon.

A meeting with Parramatta Eels senior and junior league supremo Jack Argent followed and he told the enthusiastic group that any new club would have to field four teams – an A-grade, A-reserve, C-grade (under-19s) and D-grade (under 17s) – for the 1964 Parramatta district competition.

Soon after, the ‘Hills District Junior Rugby League Club’ was born with Argent’s committee agreeing to drop the under-17s requirement. And so Hills, who adopted the big white bull’s head as its signature feature (adopted from the logo of the Bull and Bush pub which was a major

supporter) on its all black jersey, came to be. John Doherty was founding president, Bill Heath vice-president, Kevin Franks the treasurer, replaced after a few months by Mick Gremmo, and Peter Norman the secretary. Original coaches were Max Caldwell (‘A’ Grade Coach) and Peter Norman (‘C’ Grade Coach). The players’ partners designed uniforms, made pom poms and became the official cheer squad.

Training was held at Yattenden Oval with its barely adequate lighting, powered via a long extension cord from a neighbouring house, and Castle Hill Showground was provided as the match venue on Sundays. It was little more than an uneven cow paddock which meant a line of players and supporters would have to scour the field, dispatching cow dung on the morning of each match day.



still a regular spectator at Crestwood Reserve on Saturdays, watching his grandchildren, or on Sundays, home and away, supporting the senior teams. Society, his life, family and his health have changed over the many years, but never his pride in and love of, the Hills Bulls. He admits he is staggered, yet not surprised, at the enormous growth, diversification and continued success of Hills District Bulls which

“Winning the Ron Massey Cup in 2022 was massive but having the clubhouse completed at Crestwood would be icing on the cake for me. The onslaught of COVID saw government funding be taken away that might have seen it finished earlier but hopefully we will have a place soon to put up memorabilia around the walls and have somewhere at Crestwood where our proud history can be

INCLUSIVENESS AND EDUCATION

There were plenty of good C-graders to choose from but the other scouring took place at the Bull and Bush and through desperate phone calls in a search of any healthy bodies that could help field the two senior sides.

Michael (Mick) Gremmo snr is the one founding father who, while not being in an official capacity for a few years now, has been an ongoing presence for all those 60 years and is

became Hills Sports. But while so much has changed, he says the inherent camaraderie and genuine community spirit has not.

“Hills has been able to develop because of the ongoing camaraderie from the coaches and people who help the team,” he said. “And they are important elements. When you go to kids’ games it is obvious how professionally everything is run; it’s so well organised.

seen and where we can have a drink and toast the memories and our achievements.”

Those young men who sported the big bull’s head in 1964, as expected, struggled for on-field success in that inaugural season in the two all-age grades yet success came to Hills quite quickly in those formative years with A-reserve winning the premiership in just the second season of 1965, a C-grade title



coming in 1966 and D-grade the following season before the big breakthrough, under the coaching of Frank Lamb, in 1971 – an A-grade grand final victory against Guildford. A year later the Bulls achieved a second grand final appearance in 1972, going down to Cabramatta.

By this time the Bulls were playing at Jasper Road Reserve (now called Torry Burn Reserve) where club members built a canteen adjacent to the dressing rooms and financed the installation of lighting for training purposes. Barry Clapham and Phil O’Brien led a youth/talent development program in the 1970s which gave great rewards, with Hills winning their first club championships in 1977 (and winning the under-7s, under-8s and under-14s (division three) competitions – a year after the junior grades moved to Crestwood. Hills won 19 premierships in the 1970s but the 1980s was the golden era of the club’s first quarter of a century, at age group level anyway as no A-grade side could be fielded in 1982 and when the club returned to the highest local grade in 1983, the Bulls did not

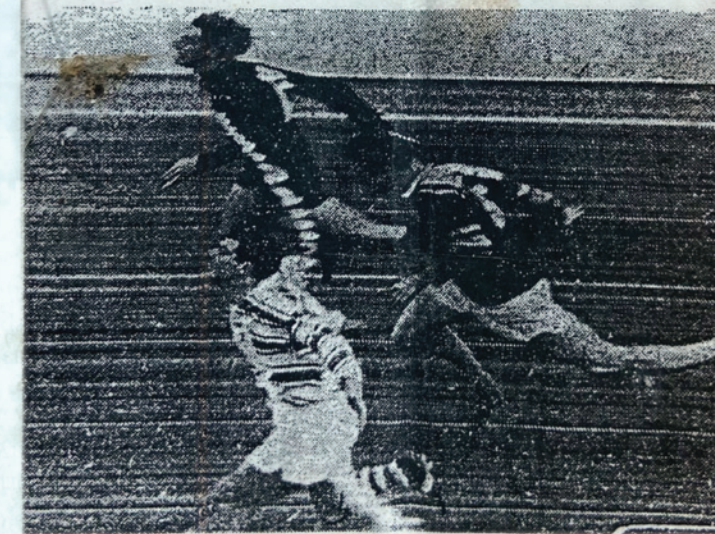
win a match. When Winston Hills was allocated Jasper Road Reserve by The Hills Shire Council, the senior teams moved to Crestwood in 1984.

In the 11-season period from 1981-91, Hills won six of its 11 Parramatta district club championships, including four in succession from 1988-91, with Wentworthville taking the other five. In 1990 the club had 25 teams, with 15 of them making it to the finals, seven to the grand final and three

taking the premiership. During that period the club dominated the Parramatta junior representative sides too. In 1992, with the giant white bull’s head across the chest already having been reduced to a smaller one as a crest, the strip was changed to include gold and maroon, to give it a more contemporary feel.

David Paull won the 1966 Richmond Gift at Richmond Greyhound track representing the Hills Bulls. David Paull was also in our Inaugural A Reserve Grade team that won the competition in 1965.

HILLS FOOTBALLER WINS GIFT



District Touch Football Association from the early 1990s, growing quickly and immensely, offering not just a new revenue stream for Hills Bulls but also another community activity for boys and men of all ages and, eventually, females became involved too.

Despite flagging in the early 2000s, the Bulls moved forward to become known as Hills Bulls Sports, a title that came as part of a

of the old second division competition which was such a success in the 1960s into the 1970s (as Metro Cup). Hills were part of the group of clubs that instigated the move to have a level of football higher than local A-grade, which had its struggles within the Parramatta league as well as other parts of Sydney. However, many within the club were concerned with the financial implications of playing in that sort of

Driven by club secretary of 1975-82, life member Barry Rudd, then also still an active player, touch football was started at Jasper Road in the summer of 1978-79 involving a group of players who had become active in the new sport at other social competitions. Rudd and his colleagues saw the potential growth of the sport and it became known as Hills

rebrand, in 2017. The moniker appropriately distinguishes what has evolved from the three-team rugby league club in 1964 through touch football and its offspring, Oztag.

Back to rugby league, and in 1990 the Bulls ventured into the higher level of Metropolitan Cup, a semi-professional competition run by the NSW Rugby League which was a recreation

league against wealthy leagues club-funded teams. Under the coaching of great club servant Allan Cook, Hills – who were encouraged by winning the A-grade grand final in 1989 – entered the new competition but were tipped by outsiders to come last against the likes of leagues club funded Wentworthville, Ryde-Eastwood, Guildford, Mt Pritchard, Western Suburbs Magpies and others. In typical Bulls’



fashion, we punched above our weight and made the grand final before going down to the Ryde-Eastwood Hawks 19-6. Four years later, Hills were back on grand final day again, this time losing to St Marys 32-14.

The financial burden was too great though and Hills dropped out of the competition after six seasons from 1990-95 (finances were prioritised towards much needed development of Crestwood Reserve) and did not return until it ventured into the Sydney Shield (a grade below the renamed former Metropolitan Cup) in 2011.

In 2016, Hills went a step further and returned to rugby league's third tier behind the NRL and the Queensland and New South Wales Cups under the guise of the Ron Massey Cup (morphed from the Metropolitan Cup after some name changes over the previous decade. With a feeder club association with North Sydney Bears being established, Hills have held their heads high for most seasons since, finishing in the finals 10 times across the two competitions

and making it to three grand finals - the 2015 Sydney Shield (lost to Wentworthville), 2022 Ron Massey Cup (won against Glebe) and 2023 Sydney Shield (won against St Marys).

Another significant event in Hill's history came in 2014 when the club decided to install a full-time administrator to run its expanded activities. Board member since 2009, Rick Palin,

had taken a redundancy after many years as Australia-New Zealand operations manager for Fujitsu's (IT services area), and agreed to take on the role. The intention was to undertake the job in a 'permanent part-time' capacity while Rick dabbled in other business interests but it quickly grew to a virtual full-time commitment operating out of Crestwood Reserve - and that does not include his honorary

weekend in-season work gladly offered as yet another Bulls servant who became personally invested in the club's aspirations.

As Hills celebrates its 60th anniversary, the memories and achievements revolve as much around young boys and girls with varying talent and success enjoying sport, enjoying the family atmosphere and the community unity that has

for so long been integral in Hills Bulls' history, as important as the number of trophies gathered. Yet the club is proud too that so many Bulls have gone onto ARL/NRL first grade careers. The complete list of more than 70 is recorded at the back of this book, however, those who have played international or State of Origin matches or won premierships include John



Kolc, Ron Hilditch, Paul Mares, Heath L'Estrange, David Williams, Jamie Buhrer, David Hall, Jason Cayless, Luke Keary and Ryan Papenhuyzen.

The Bulls mantra of 'Club, Team, Player' was introduced in 2018 and they became more than words written on a whiteboard or underneath

MEMORIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Along the six decades, the successes, challenges and setbacks have been abundant and many of those early stalwarts are still around the club. What they and so many others have shared is a very special loyalty and camaraderie that seems inherent in the Hills Bulls Sports Club, from which came the popular catch-cry, 'Once a Bull, Always a Bull'.

a letterhead, The words are practised by many who identify with the message's intention - that players, and officials, parents and supporters should think of the club first, their team second and themselves third. A mammoth proportion of those involved at the Hills have embraced that mantra more convincingly than perhaps anyone could have envisaged.



And Crestwood Reserve, which underwent its second major upgrade in the past seven years, has long been known as the ‘Bull Pit’ by local and visiting supporters and players. And, typically, the Crestwood development has only been possible through the devotion and donation of time, money and effort by the likes of Glenn Starr (president from 2010-17) and the Gremmo family through their building company.

In 2023, Hills Bulls Sports Club encompasses 43 junior rugby league teams, six girls teams, an open age women’s team, 368 Oztag teams, four League Tag teams, 14 touch football teams and an all-abilities team, around 4000 participants. Rugby league for females has had an enormous growth in popularity and participation in the past five years particularly and Hills typifies this growth. In 2023 we entered under-14, under-16 and open’s teams.

Oztag has seen a mammoth spike; the Hills competition began with 600 players in the summer of 2010 and has grown to more than

4000 participants in 348 teams participating in the 2022 winter and summer domestic competitions over five nights a week, with only green space limiting its growth. More than 320 players competed in the 2023 State Cup, with Hills winning the club championships for the first time and providing 17 Australian representatives.

Hills are widely respected and, yes, despite

DEVELOP ANY PLAYER

the significant change of demographics of Sydney’s west and north-west, the rivalry with ‘Wenty’ has not waned. Operations manager of Parramatta Eels elite pathways, Matthew Brady, has admired not just the success of Hills, but how they have achieved it.

“Over the past 10 years, the Hills Bulls have shown a strong focus on all areas of football,

from developing under-six mini-camps to tag competitions, playing in the NSWRL major competitions and being successful without the backing of a leagues club,” he said.

“What has been more impressive during this time is that they have become the largest club in the Parramatta district, which is a testament to their dedication

and commitment to the community. The Hills Bulls have developed a philosophy of ‘club, team, player’ which has gone on to strengthen the ties of the community with the club.

“One of the most remarkable things about the Hills Bulls is their overwhelming desire and culture to develop any player, regardless of ability. They give everyone a home to



large, loving family; that is, being there for the good times as well as a the not so good times.

‘We have the best supporters not only numerically (see the crowds at Crestwood when Sydney Shield and Ron Massey teams play) but also in their passion. The growth I have seen relating to the introduction of Oztag, the introduction of girl’s rugby league (inaugural premiers) and in League Tag, an A-grade women’s side in 2023 and now the near commencement of the new clubhouse and gym shows not only vision and commitment by the Bulls’ board but by many individuals who put the club first.”



Mark Mahoney, who had held positions of president, vice-president, treasurer, head of coaching and development, coach and trainer over 25 years of dedicated service to the Bulls, pays tribute to those who have given so much in time, money and big-hearted effort, for the club to prosper. "Hills is a huge club with so many moving parts to it just to make it function," he said. "We do not have a leagues club that can assist us with funding, so we rely on very generous sponsors that put their hands in their pockets every year. Some of them put large sums of money and their personal time every year with no expectation to square the ledger. I will not embarrass them but they know who they are, current sponsors as well as the past sponsors."

Barry Rudd is one of many who has retreated into the background but can be seen at Crestwood supporting his old club and maintains strong bonds and contact with those he has played with, coached or assisted over more than 25 years as a Bulls leader. He gave

this insight: "In essence, when I was involved everything politically separated into junior equipment, junior fields, playing fields, canteen committees and so on, so it was hard because it was so segregated. It's now unified, which is a significant change. And because it's unified, it ensures there is more inclusiveness and that has led to an all abilities team, girls playing, expanding from touch football to Oztag and

League Tag; membership growing and the club is prospering because of its unity and the community supporting that. There are so many kids playing sport with their families involved and that's a wonderful community asset.

"What am I proudest about when I look at Hills today? Their ability to evolve with society's changes and still provide sport and



learning more about, or reliving, the preceding 50 years can still access the 2013 book online - www.hillsbulls.com.au/50th-anniversary-year-book/ To chronicle the growth of the Bulls in the past 10 years, and document how far the club has progressed in that time, why not start at the pinnacle, the one day that the many Hills club people will never ever forget. When the Bulls found the Holy Grail.

CHECK OUT THE 50 YEAR BOOK



opportunity for young people in the district in such a healthy environment. Times have changed and Hills have grown alongside those changes, while other clubs have faded away. "Hills Bulls can provide things others can't, and that's a great feather in their cap. The club has been able to defy politics, defy enormous financial challenges and defy these big changes

in modern society and remain strong and united. "That's the measure of success - facing a challenge, meeting that challenge, doing it with unity and strong principles and progressing forward. That's success, not having a blazer to say I've won the comp." The following pages will take the readers into the progress of the past decade. Those who are interested in



CHAPTER 2 THE HOLY GRAIL

BULLS' BIGGEST WIN – RON MASSEY CUP 2022

It was Father's Day 2022. September 4. An appropriate day for the Gremmo family to witness the final act of the club's record 59th season.

The father and son Micks sat in the grandstand as the chilly wind blew off Botany Bay, with many other Hills Bulls stalwarts nearby, as the club's most senior team, playing in the highest level competition of any sporting team from the Hills District, avenged a shock semi-final thrashing against Glebe to win the Massey Cup premiership with an 18-12 victory.

significant achievements of 2022 which served as a barometer of just how far the club formed in 1963 by Mick Gremmo Snr, now 78 years of age, and his mates from Baulkham Hills rugby union club, had come since those heady days when the cow dung on Castle Hill Showground had to be cleared before a footy game could be played.

A DAY TO REMEMBER FOREVER

Mick snr, Mick jnr and many members of the extended Gremmo family were part of a stampede of Bulls supporters that headed across Sydney to watch Hills attempt to snatch the Holy Grail in the grand final of the Ron Massey Cup against Glebe at Kogarah Jubilee Oval, the spiritual home of the 'Red V' adorned by the Dragons of St George and St George Illawarra.

Euphoric scenes followed. Longtime supporters and Bulls servants wept tears of joy. The players bunched around the trophy on the center-field stage and belted out the club song, with a choir dressed in black jackets joining in from the grandstand. A day to remember forever.

In true recognition of the 'family club', it has to be stated that this was only one of many

It capped an incredible 2022 which also saw Hills win the Parramatta junior league's club championship, junior club or the year award and a host of individual awards while the incredible success of Oztag was evidenced by record representative honours while the passion and pride entrenched in girls and women's rugby league teams was turning heads.



Now, in the name of Hills Sports Club with its modern branding extending into its 'branches' of rugby league, touch footy, Oztag and League Tag, Hills could undoubtedly lay claim to being the most successful senior/junior rugby league club in the country, certainly kings of those that do not have the funding stream from a licensed club. And it would certainly have a claim to being the best run too.

Beyond all that, the victory by the club's most senior side, considering the circumstances that led to it, absolutely 'iced' the Hills Bulls' greatest year.

Sure, Hills people will never overlook the basic essence of what the club is about - providing opportunities for players of all ages and talent to participate in rugby league or its more modern derivatives. However, this victory was the pinnacle of the semi-professional cog of the club's operations. Hills had been renowned for punching above their weight at this level, competing admirably

against teams with licensed club funding and containing players who receive higher match payments and attractive sign-on fees.

Now it proved the Bulls could beat them. And convincingly, after going through the competition rounds unbeaten.

Gremmo senior, who has missed few Massey Cup and Sydney Shield games on a Sunday at Crestwood, says playing in the winning A-reserve grand final side in 1965, the club's second season, the first A-grade premiership victory in 1971 with a side that included future Australian internationals Ron Hilditch and John Kolc, plus the 2001 feat of winning A-grade, A-reserve and C-grade, remain his most special victory memories during an era when the Bulls played for the love of the game, their club and for little money. But the Ron Massey Cup was special simply because of its David v Goliath touch.

"It was awesome to achieve that in a competition where the other clubs have all

the money," he said. "To get players to come to Hills and build tremendous camaraderie and then win the Cup; that was supernatural. A lot of those players could have gone elsewhere for more money but they just clicked and built something special."

And across that 60-year journey, the sense of tradition has never been lost, nor has the



SENSE OF TRADITION

respect for those who dug the well in the 1960s when 'Hills District' were best known for its black jersey with the big white bull's head on the chest. And for Mick Gremmo, who had just spent seven weeks in hospital battling emphysema, two of them in an induced coma, to be at Kogarah Oval to see the victory in person was meant to be.

Alongside him were Mick jnr who is the current president, other sons Andrew, Richard and David who does enormous work behind the scenes despite rejecting invitations to join the committee, and three generations of the Gremmo family at the stadium for the special day. Watching from home were old Mick senior's great mates of those early times, Col Wilkinson and Phil Evenden, who

Mick still catches up with weekly, which shows that the bonds are still strong and the foundations they built are still solid.

Sadly, not present, but on everybody's minds, was Nathan Gremmo, who tragically lost his life in May 2015 at the age of 13. Nathan, the son of Mick jnr and his wife Kylie, was a much loved and respected member of the



Bulls' junior ranks and ball boy of the senior teams since their return to the fold in 2013. It floored not just a family but all at the club and much of the Hills district community when they lost their adored little mate, who played halfback with such enthusiasm.

'#Gremmo7' was an instant addition to the senior teams' jerseys, at the players' request, as was the on-field call to higher effort of 'Gremmo'. It has become the Bulls' version of the famous 'Queenslander' call that is State of Origin legend. There were a magnitude of 'Gremmo' calls on grand final day as the Bulls desperately defended their line.

Nathan's 'ball boy' duties have been conducted since by Nathan's younger sister Ash, adding another special family connection to this historic day.

Also at Kogarah that Sunday afternoon in September, in fact sitting next to his great mate Mick Gremmo (jnr), was the man many refer to as the 'Godfather of senior football', Paul Griffin.

While there was some reticence within the club to take the large leap back into senior out-of-district rugby league and the financial demands that come with semi-professionalism, 'Griffo' stuck his neck out, dipped into his own pocket and convinced many others to reinvigorate the Sydney Shield campaign in 2013 after two seasons of battle and lack of real commitment.

Griffo took on the coaching duties of the Shield side and when a second senior team was introduced in 2016, the grade higher called Ron Massey Cup, he stepped up to that level the season after the heartache of a Sydney Shield grand final loss to arch-rivals Wentworthville.

There had been near-misses, heartache, the COVID interruptions which saw a contingent composite competition that



GODFATHER OF SENIOR FOOTBALL

became the President's Cup staged in 2020 and abandonment of the 2021 season after eight rounds when Hills were in second spot in the Shield and Cup competitions. Finally, the juggernaut could not be stopped.

"Naturally it was exciting, and rewarding, for many of us," 'Griffo' reflected. 'A lot of work went into it over the years. There was a bit of apprehension about having a senior

side at first but it has all proved worthwhile. It was a massive achievement for our club, considering our financial disadvantage. That win meant a lot to a lot of people.'

Skipper that day, and club captain, was tough prop Tim Robinson, who, at age 34, had as much right as any to hold aloft the winners' trophy. He'd returned to the club as a former NRL player in 2016 and had refused to walk away

despite some tough times (wooden spooners in 2018) and more lucrative offers to play for the richer clubs. Instead he shook off retirement temptations to epitomise the 'dig in for each other' motto ... and was suitably rewarded.

Coach Michael Withers might have played in four English Super League grand finals and two Challenge Cup finals during Bradford Bulls' greatest era from 1999-2005 (he remains



the only player to score three tries in a Super League grand final), but this particularly day, before a few thousands hearty supporters at suburban Kogarah Oval, was a proud moment that gave him great satisfaction.

“When the siren went, you could see all the jubilation and plenty of tears of joy from so many people,” he recalled, “It was a wonderful moment; a great feeling. It was a big thing for the people who have invested their own money and a lot of time, and many others who come every week to watch the team. It was great for them to witness the moment. It was more than a one season effort for a lot of people.

“I was immensely proud. When I took over, we were coming off the wooden spoon and I’d invested a lot of time over four seasons and the players were tremendous in buying into what we wanted to achieve. To beat these clubs who had a lot of reputation and a lot more money, and most with coaches who had a lot more experience than me, gave me great satisfaction.

I was very proud, not just of the players but my coaching staff too and the club itself.

“We punch way above our weight although the North Sydney pathway helps – and we need it.

“I think other clubs are jealous of what the Bulls have in terms of camaraderie, that’s what you sense anyway,” said the father who has three children playing for the Bulls.

“We really are representative of the Hills area; just about everyone comes from the district. When you get here, you think, ‘Why would you want to go anywhere else.’

There were few who disagreed as Hills Bulls entered their 60th season in 2023 as arguably the greatest club in Sydney’s western region.





CHAPTER 3 A DECADE OF DIVERSITY

THE GROWTH AND SUCCESS OF THE BULLS 2013-22

When Hills Bulls administrators, with the help of many long-serving clubmen, dug back into the first 50 years of the club's history, they unveiled memories of gradual development, of successes, hardship, expansion and

Rugby league for females and its derivative 'League Tag' has exploded with Hills at the forefront locally. Hills' Oztags teams are consistently among the best performed in New South Wales and won the club's inaugural state championship title in 2023. In 2022 the Bulls won their first Parramatta junior league club championship since 2004 and a host of team and individual awards. And the senior rugby

with 47 (29 percent) being attained in that particular decade. Here's a look at years since the 50th anniversary books was released.

2013

When Hills Bulls celebrated the 50th year of existence in 2013, the club had certainly established itself as one of the top few clubs

IN BULLS POSSESSION

relocation to the long-term spiritual home that is Crestwood Reserve. None of them would have anticipated the pace of change that would follow in the succeeding decade.

Since that 2013 celebration there has been a change of name and the associated branding the Hills Bulls would use to promote a far more diverse organisation.

league 'Holy Grail', the Ron Massey Cup trophy, was in the Bulls' possession. And touch football continues to be a valued part of the Bulls' offering of recreation to Hills district families.

And when it comes to on-field success, the decade of 2013-22 has been the best in the club's 60 years. Hills Bulls have won 161 rugby league/League Tag premierships

in the Parramatta junior league. Hills were the biggest Parramatta junior club with 45 teams (over 800 players) – 74 percent of which made it to the semi-final stage, five of those being minor premiers and six finishing second, and the conversion rate in the finals was 11 teams making it to the grand final and five finishing as premiers – under-8 (div 2), under 11 (div 4),



under-13 (div 3), under-14 (div 2) and under-17 (div 2). What was then a record number of players achieved junior representative honours within the systems of Parramatta, Balmain and North Sydney. The Sydney Shield side made the semi-finals. Oztag was taking off too with 1800 junior and 300 senior players and the Bulls won its first state cup teams final that year.

The cheer leaders squad, which has become a major part of the Hills Bull fraternity, began in 2013, launched by life member Paul Griffin's daughter Kayla who was their coach for many years.

With a squad of 20-30 regularly, with ages of members ranging from four to adults, the 'Bullettes' are a regular feature at Crestwood on Sunday's Sydney Shield and Ron Massey Cup matches and have their own annual awards as encouragement for the girls who give up their time so enthusiastically.

2014

To reflect the enormous growth of the overall operations, the board believed a full-time administrator was required with director/treasurer Rick Palin, who had recently accepted a redundancy from his employer Fujitsu, accepting the role in 2014. Rick had been Australia and New Zealand operations

manager for Fujitsu's IT services sector. The initial intention was for Rick to devote what hours were necessary for the diversifying Hills to be run efficiently while pursuing other business interests but the secretary's role soon grew to be all-consuming and he continues his outstanding work a decade later, operating out of an office behind the bar at Crestwood Reserve's amenities building.

At the time of Rick Palin's appointment, the Bulls had 694 registered rugby league players across 41 teams, 2800 junior and senior Oztag players as well as around 800 touch footballers. The first projects Rick took on were the establishment of a club governance manual, compiling policies, procedures and implementing MYOB bookkeeping and fully audited accounting practices.

At the time, while rugby league was the main focus, Oztag was the most rapidly expanding component of the club. President Glenn Starr wrote in the 2014 yearbook: "Our Oztag competition has again had record numbers of players, registering over 2300 kids and over 500 adults, well beyond any expectation. The club's success in Oztag is quite remarkable

Success continued on the rugby league field with six teams making grand finals, with under-14 (div 2) and C-grade (div 1) becoming premiers. The depth of junior talent was seen in the fact that 13 Hills Bulls players played in the Harold Matthews (under-16) competition for Parramatta, Western Academy or North Sydney and eight played in the SG

THE CHEERLEADERS SQUAD



and is a direct result of the dedication and commitment from Leon Don, Angela Scott and the Oztag team. Oztag has now moved to multiple nights, entertaining thousands and is a real asset to the club. In conjunction with these numbers, Steve Marks has done a great job with our touch competition, working tirelessly ensuring our touch members take the field each week on time and ready to go."

Ball competition (under-18) representing either Parramatta, Western Academy, North Sydney, Balmain or WA Pirates.

The A-grade side, which struggled for numbers early in the season, showed enormous character to win the minor premiership and make the grand final, going down to Toongabbie 22-10. In their report of the season, coach Chris O'Toole and manager Noel McLean



commented, "The bond between this group on and off the park is like no other that we have ever witnessed in a rugby league team and we're hoping the majority can stick together to go one better in 2015."

Sydney Shield player Robert Young became just the sixth player to join the club's 'Immortals' list by playing his 300th game in Bulls colours in 2014, joining Darryl Abbott, Martin Shanahan, Peter Heath, Chris Pearce and Mark Harvey.

2015

The year 2015 will unfortunately always carry the event that rocked the club and the wider Hills community with the tragic death of Nathan Gremmo at the age of 13 (see chapter seven). 'Nath' was very much an inspiration for some outstanding team performances, especially the Sydney Shield's campaign which took them to a heart-breaking grand final loss at Parramatta Stadium that season.

Bulls' C-grade team successfully defended its premiership won in 2014, one of five grand final teams, including the A-grade side which meant the club's three most senior sides competed on the last day of the season.

Paul Griffin was a popular recipient of the Ron Stellar club person of the year award for his exceptional efforts, not just as coach

of the Sydney Shield side after being the chief instigator of creating a professional approach to the club's highest level of competition, but in many supportive roles across all levels, including being a sponsor.

The annual under-13 tour to Queensland, which was the brainchild of Lance Denison as an incentive to retain young players, was

launched in 2015 and the well-organised trip remains a highlight of the season today.

The performance of the Michael Withers-coached C-grade team was certainly a highlight of the season, making their second successive grand final after beating the previously undefeated Cabramatta 14-12 in a cliff-hanger grand final in 2014. This time Hills were minor

premiers and came from 6-0 down to beat Marconi 18-12 to go directly into the grand final. Marconi were again the opponents and Hills fought back from a 16-6 half-time deficit before scoring four converted tries and keeping Marconi scoreless in the second half, for a convincing 30-16 victory. That cast the team into a clash with Penrith side St Clair in the

2016

As it turned out, 2016 was a significant year in the development of Hills Bulls as a club in so many areas. The feeder club relationship with the North Sydney Bears was established and the Bulls fielded teams in both the Sydney Shield and Ron Massey Cup for the first time. A girls team was fielded for the first time too,

INCLUSIVENESS AND EDUCATION



'Battle of the West' showdown. Again, Bulls started slowly and were down 18-4 at half-time, yet again responded brilliantly, keeping St Clair scoreless while scoring 30 second-half to win 34-18 and become the first team from Hills to win the clash and be declared the best under-19 team in western Sydney. The season record was 17 victories, one loss and a draw.

with Matt Rennie's side winning the premiership in their inaugural season. Matt also introduced the first mini-clinic for children aged four to eight who had not previously played rugby league. And his coaching and development colleague Mark Mahoney introduced the Hills Bulls Development Academy which was initially aimed at 11-13-year-olds.

A DECADE OF DIVERSITY



All this was being put into motion while building works began at Crestwood, with stage one extending the canteen and home change room, updating bathrooms, increasing storage areas and preparing slab for upstairs multifunction room.

The playing numbers remained buoyant with 691 registered rugby league players in 42 teams. Nine made it to their grand final with four premierships attained – under-12 (div 3), under-15 (div 2), under-16 (div 2) and the girls’ team. The C grade, despite 10 straight wins mid-season and finishing second on the ladder, were unable to take their impressive record to four straight grand finals with injuries setting in late in the season which contributed to going out of the finals with successive losses.

Hills had more players in the junior representative competitions than any other club with 18 while Gerald McCallum was chosen in the NSWRL’s Ron Massey State of Origin team and Josh Curran was selected in the Blues’ under-18 Origin side as well as the Australian (under-18s) Schoolboys.

2017

The progress continued in 2017 which was a benchmark year in Hills Bulls’ history in that the club’s ‘brand’ underwent an overhaul to truly represent the diversity of participation. Director Scott Chalcraft, with able assistance of fellow director Mark Mahoney, spearheaded the launch of Hills Bulls Sports Club as a new

brand name and a uniform series of logos incorporated into a ‘rebirth’ of the club.

Eight different logos were designed, each displaying a more contemporary bull’s head. Apparel for each section of the club’s activities had its own logo – Bulls’ juniors, seniors, girls, mini Bulls, academy, Oztag, touch football and masters footy.

something more consolidated so we have one brand,” Scott said. “We’d gone from a rugby league club to a sports club because we had league, touch football, Oztag, women’s rugby league and League Tag. The whole idea was to move towards being seen as a sport club and contemporize the branding and become more modern and have a uniform brand.

INCLUSIVENESS AND EDUCATION



Scott Chalcraft, who had been brought onto the board in 2016, felt the club’s image and profile needed to be consolidated into a more uniform feel that represented a highly diverse yet united sports club, which the Bulls had certainly become.

“I saw we had a bunch of logos but none looked the same, so I said why don’t we get

“So we branded with the bull but each one is a little different. Oztag has a tag on bull’s ear for example and the girls’ logo has a fringe on the bull. We tidied up the colour panel too so we had compliance around everything.”

With time provided on a pro bono basis through Scott, who had had years’ of experience at the top-end of advertising, and Mark Mahoney who



also has a depth of experience in marketing and packaging, the revamp – while at first met with some apprehension by some of the club’s diehards - has been an outstanding success. Alongside this, the website had an overhaul and social media presence through Facebook and Instagram was increased.

“It was met with a bit of apprehension at first,” Scott recalled, “We had some passionate people, some who had tattoos of Hills Bulls’ old logo, but once we explained that we had young people coming through, and things had changed with social media and the club has grown in all aspects of the different sports we were offering, I think most people eventually accepted it and don’t blink an eyelid anymore. Merchandise sales online is going gangbusters.”

The interest of females in playing rugby league increased and the under-16 team again made the grand final, one of 11 Hills teams to qualify for the 2017 deciders, with five walking away as premiers – under-13

divisions one and four, under-16 divisions one and three and the C-grade.

The C-grade side completed an extraordinary period of success under the coaching of former Wests Tigers and Bradford Bulls star player Michael Withers, winning a third premiership in that period with a 22-6 victory over Mounties in the grand final, the side’s 15th win from

its 16 games. Withers went on to take on the Ron Massey Cup in 2019, leaving a record of three premierships from four grand final appearances from 2013-17 with the under-19s. Tony Cosatto, another former NRL player, took on the C-graders in 2018, the competition’s last season at under-19 (it became under-18s in 2019) and took them to another grand final.

A feature of the 2017 Ron Massey Cup season was the return of Heath L'Estrange to his junior club. He was exceptional at hooker, winning the competition’s player of the year award and leading Hills to the semi-finals. He was joined by former 220-game NRL performer (and Tongan international) Feleti Mateo who, with prop Tim Robinson, added valuable NRL

experience to Paul Griffin’s side. Hills had strong representation in the Massey Cup NSW rep team with Tom Young, Chad O’Donnell, Jamel Hunt, Clayton Williams and Tim Robinson (who pulled out due to birth of his first child).

Oztag had grown to a capacity 4000 participants (3500 juniors and 500 seniors) and had become a force at the annual state titles

At season’s end there was a changing of the guard at board level with Michael Gremmo taking over from the equally dedicated Glenn Starr who had served in the position since 2009. Glenn Starr’s contribution was substantial. While at the helm of the club, Hills Bulls’ growth and development went to a new level of professionalism and he was

instrumental in many of the club’s initiatives during his 10-year tenure on the board. Many refer to Crestwood’s tiered seating and standing viewing areas around field one, renamed Hilditch Field, as ‘Starr’s Stadium’ due to him almost single-handedly facilitating and building the terraced area as well as delivering the best clubhouse bathroom renovation in the region.

CLUB, TEAM, PLAYER



A DECADE OF DIVERSITY

60TH ANNIVERSARY



2018

One of the first initiatives of Michael Gremmo when he took over the presidency was to instal the new mantra of 'Club - Team - Player'. They could have been words which sounded brilliant philosophically and made a fancy contemporary organisational statement. But the motto would have been baseless unless club members were convinced of its value and were prepared to 'buy in'.

Five years on, its power is unquestioned, its purpose profound.

The term was initially used by Sydney Shield coach Trevor Schodel but through Michael Gremmo's prompting, the board decided the drive the manta as a club-wide value.

"I just thought those three words should stand for what the entire club is about; something we could build the whole ethos and our values around - every volunteer, official, players, coach, trainer ... everyone," he said.

"And it has really resonated with people within the club. We live it. And it's on the bottom of every letter, in all our speeches at functions, on our social media posts. It's a major part of who we are as a club and what makes it work is that so many of us believe it and respect what it stands for. It's a big part of our identity.

"We have the word 'Pride' on our jerseys too along with the '#gremmo7' which is a moving tribute to Nath and something I'm also very proud of."

That first season under the new catchcry (2018) saw 25 of a possible 31 teams play finals football, with 15 participating in grand finals and eight going on to win their premierships. They were under-9 (div 3), under-10 (div 1), under-10 (div 4), under-11 (div 1), under-17 (div 2), under-23s and in the girls' League Tag the under-10 and under-15. The under-15 League Tag was one squad but split into two teams on match days and while officially only one is recognised in the competition records as



premiers, both teams are recognised by the club as premiership winning teams (thus reference to nine winning teams that season).

That feat of eight premierships in the one season remains a club record, one ahead of the seven won the following season.

The Bulls finished second to Wentworthville in the Parramatta juniors' club championships. Vanessa Beck (under-15 League Tag) won the Parramatta JRL coach of the year award while Luke Sammut was awarded the Michael Cronin Parramatta Club Person of the Year title.

Two new competitions were introduced by the Parramatta junior league, under-23s and under-15 girls League Tag. Hills won both competitions with our girls' teams fighting out the grand final in the new League Tag competition.

Hills Bulls Sports were well represented at the Oztag State Cup too, finishing second to South Sydney in the state championships, our best result at that stage, with 16 of 18 teams

qualifying for the finals, six progressing to the grand final and four teams being crowned state champions, including the under-13 girls, meaning this group had won their age group state championships for the fifth successive year. The other winners were the under-10 boys, under-11 girls, under-12 boys and under-13 girls. Liam Haskins and Zac Barry were selected to represent in the Australian Oztag teams at the end of the tournament.

The senior rugby league teams were badly hit by injuries and both missed the finals but club captain Tim Robinson, who had to withdraw the previous year, was selected as captain of the NSWRL Ron Massey State of Origin team.

2019

Hills Bulls finished second to Wentworthville again in the 2019 Parramatta club championships but this time it was agonisingly close - only seven points separating the two dominant clubs (1120 to 1113) with Cabramatta and distant third with 794.



At senior level, the Ron Massey Cup team came from the bottom half of the finals matches, beating Guildford and Asquith, to qualify for the preliminary final but fell just short of making the grand final for the first time.

Hills fielded 41 rugby league teams from under-8 to Ron Massey Cup and of the 33 eligible to play finals football, 28 did (with six finishing as minor premiers) – an outstanding effort. Sixteen teams made it to the grand final with seven declared premiers – under-9 (div 1), under-15 (div 1 and div 2), under-18 (div 2) and League Tag teams in the under-11, under-13, under-15 age groups. The Bulls entered five teams in the League Tag competitions, with three teams winning the premiership and we dominated the under-11s with our teams finishing first, second and third.

The Oztag representatives were again among the best in New South Wales again and finished third in the State Cup Championships with five teams making the grand finals and three teams becoming champions. More than 80 players



and four coaches were selected to represent in the Western City Scorpions and Keahlan Bray was selected as an Australian representative.

The power of Hills Bulls being a credible nursery for the NRL was clearly evident when Ryan Papenhuyzen (Melbourne Storm) and Josh Curran (Sydney Roosters) made NRL debuts, joining Luke Keary who had become an Australian international and won two premierships with the Roosters.

2020/2021

The years 2020 and 2021 will be remembered worldwide for the coronavirus pandemic that had a massive impact on society, let alone community sport. The NRL competition was put under threat of being able to continue but, after the competition being suspended temporarily during both seasons, was able to get through to the grand final, although under strict quarantine conditions.

The 'reserve grade' competitions, the Queensland and NSW Cups, were cancelled in 2020 but an abridged version of the Sydney Shield continued while some Ron Massey Cup teams joined country division sides to form the President's Cup. Competing teams were Hills, Maitland, Glebe, Burwood, North Sydney, Illawarra Wests, Dubbo CYMS, Western Rams, Thirroul and Wentworthville. Hills were beaten in the semi-final by Maitland who went on to beat Glebe in the grand final.

Michael Gremmo's president's report of 2020 gives an insight: "This year will certainly be a year that we will remember due to the challenges that we have all had to face both on and off the field. For the first time in living memory we have witnessed clubs which are supported by large leagues clubs pull out of both the junior and senior rugby league competitions. Despite the disruption, the Mighty Bulls charged on to compete in all competitions. We have been determined not to disappoint our large community of players, supporters and friends.

"I would like to thank the work of our board members, sponsors, parents, players and our wider Bulls community who have volunteered and contributed throughout the year to assist us in satisfying the ever-changing regulations which we all have had to adhere to. Thanks to your support, our teams had the necessary equipment both on the training paddock and playing games of footy and tag in season 2020.



“We have a strong community supported by an unwavering mantra of CLUB – TEAM – PLAYER.

“Rick Palin, our club Administrator and Secretary, went above and beyond this year to have workable COVID plans in place enabling the season to commence and run smoothly – thanks for all your hard work Rick.”

The 2021 season began with the cloud of Covid-19 still hovering over the sporting landscape and Hills Bulls had high expectations of success. However, after nine rounds of league competition, the season was suspended in late June and, despite hopes of a return to the field, the season was cancelled on August 17. Premierships were awarded to the teams at the head of the competition ladders at that time and Hills provided six premiers and five runners-up. The Ron Massey Cup and Sydney Shield teams were running second on the ladder when their competitions were abandoned.

Being conducted earlier in the year, the Oztag representative teams were still able to take part

in the NSW Oztag State Cup and Hills were again one of the strongest performers, finishing third with three teams being champions, four finishing runners-up and six teams making the semi-finals. The under-20 women’s team also won their division two grand final to become the first Hills’ senior team to win a State Cup.

The board agreed and felt that, while the season was compromised, there were still plenty of achievements on and off the field to recognise and conducted the traditional presentation day, under strict Covid protocols, and the yearbook was again produced. Despite the unprecedented challenges that confronted all sporting clubs, the Hills Bulls’ spirit remained unmoved and the support and commitment from players, sponsors, volunteers and spectators was as strong as it had ever been within this proud community club.

The way Hills Bulls navigated through two unique years in the club’s history with tremendous unity, pride and care, was a





CHAPTER 4 THE BULLS' GREATEST SEASON

A LOOK AT THE RECORD YEAR, 2022

It was appropriate that, as Hills Bulls' stalwarts began planning, in the second half of 2022, the celebrations for the club's 60th anniversary, it would celebrate its greatest season club-wide in all of those proud six decades.

ultimate prize of winning the 2022 Parramatta Junior Rugby League Club Championship and the Parramatta JRL Club of the Year. This, along with many other accomplishments listed below, makes this the most successful year in the mighty Bulls history."

It was all there for anyone involved in the Parramatta juniors to see as Hills

It was the 11th time the Bulls had won the Parramatta junior league club championships but the first time since 2004, breaking the stranglehold of Wentworthville who had taken the previous 10 titles (there was no club championship awarded in the Covid-hit 2020, 2021 seasons).

Hills now stand second to the dominant Wenty

GREATEST SEASON CLUB-WIDE

The achievements of 2022 were so complete it is unlikely they will ever be repeated.

Then again, the Bulls have proved that nothing is beyond them.

Proud president Michael Gremmo declared in the annual report: "2022 will certainly go down as one of the greatest years in the mighty Hills Bulls' history. Our mighty juniors achieved the

officials repeatedly took the stage at the district league's presentation night, collecting the following awards:

- Coach of the Year - Sam Rutherford
- Club of the Year
- Modified Junior Incentive Award
- Junior Incentive Award
- Club Championship

(41 titles) on the club championships tally since the Parramatta juniors were established in 1947, with 11, one ahead of Cabramatta. Considering the Bulls were not formed until the 1964 season, this is an outstanding achievement as Wentworthville and Cabramatta had 17 seasons start, both well established in 1947 when the Parramatta league was inaugurated.

THE BULLS' GREATEST SEASON



Hills Bulls were also recognised by the Hills Shire by being highly commended in their Australia Day awards in the Community Group of the Year category, and had their best composite season for the senior grades with the A-grade and Ron Massey Cup teams finishing as minor premiers and the Sydney Shield finishing second on the ladder. Unfortunately, only Ron Massey Cup went on to win the premiership.

And that team was in good company. These junior rugby league teams won their grand finals – under-14 (div 1), under-11 (div 1), under-11 (div 3) and under-11 girls League Tag. Grand final teams were under-13 (div 1), under-13 girls League Tag, under-11 boys (div 3) and under-10 (div 1) while the under-14 (div 1) side were minor premiers.

The Bulls fielded 34 rugby league teams, four League Tag sides. Twenty-one of 29 teams eligible to make the finals (there is no official competition below under-10s), an incredible example of consistency and excellence.

And that was the rugby league record. If we turn attention to Oztag, it was a magnificent year.

The Oztag State Cup was pushed back to May and Hills Bulls squads competed across all competitions, finishing third in the NSW club championships and setting a new record of participation by fielding 18 junior teams. Hills Bull Sports provided 17 finalists, 11 semi-finalists, eight grand finalists and three State Cup champions (under-16 boys, under-14

girls and under-15 girls). There were also 123 players and 10 coaches picked to represent in the West Sydney Tigers Regional Oztag competition and 13 players went on to be Australian representatives. Hills had 3400 junior players and 650 senior players in its competitions played at Crestwood Reserve, making it one of the most successful and best run competitions in Australia.



BEST COMPOSITE SEASON



“Baulkham Hills Oztag is a thriving part of the Hills Bulls Sports Club,” said president Michael Gremmo. “Each summer our competition continues to grow with existing and new players from various winter sports clubs coming to Crestwood to play Oztag. For some, this is all about creating a team of friends in our boys, women, mixed and senior competitions to have fun and keep active. For those wanting to take their Oztag to the next level, the Hills Bulls State

Cup squads are the perfect pathway, competing at the NSW Oztag State Cup each year.”

The depth of participation in Hills Bulls Sports activities was phenomenal. There were 594 registered rugby league players and more than 4000 Oztag players – 3400 junior and 650 senior. Oztag is annual “sold out” with no space for any more registrations.

THE BULLS' GREATEST SEASON



The Bulls provided eight Parramatta SG Ball (under-19s) representatives, three in the Eels' Jersey Flegg (under-21). At schoolboys level the club had four players chosen for NSW at primary school level and four at high school level. The two Australian Oztag representatives chosen from the State Cup titles were Keely Stevens and Keira Field.

It was a benchmark year for female participation in rugby league too. It is a quickly expanding part of the sport and an overwhelming interest by girls locally saw the reintroduction of tackle rugby league with the under-14 tackle team competing at a very high level. The Bulls also fielded four girls League Tag teams, setting a great platform for our female teams to thrive into the future.

Another milestone from 2022 that is certainly worth recording is one of the Bulls' favourite sons, Sean Walpole, joining the club's 'Immortals' (only the eighth recorded in the club's history) by playing his 300th



Director and full-time secretary Palin, when asked why the club was so successful, now inarguably the best in the west-south west region, replied, "Having the right people.

"The club is full of good families, the area itself has always been a good community and we've had the right people to come in and manage the club; providing the right governance and

second and the player as an individual works when we live by it. It can lead to some tough and at times unpopular decisions being made where players may not be in the same team as their mates or a coach has to be moved on so players can be developed further. It has led to some parents taking their kids away but I'd like to think in most cases the grass wasn't greener elsewhere. We've tried to be

on the board we would take the club forward. We have some incredible people on the board - and we all know we are just the caretakers until the next group come along."

There are many indicators of success and not always measured by premierships and victories.

The major role the Hills Bulls Sports Club play in providing a healthy sporting and community environment is seen in the number of teams

THE CLUB IS FULL OF GOOD FAMILIES

game. He took his tally to 313 matches over 20 seasons and is still playing in the Sydney Shield and Ron Massey Cup teams.

Under the astute stewardship of a board of directors of Michael Gremmo, Peter Beck, Rick Palin, Mark Mahoney, Paul Griffin, Scott Chalcraft, Justin Moynihan, Aaron Gonzalez, Graham Marshall, Martin Shanahan, Ryan Orley, Yass Sidaros and Craig Culnane, Hills Bulls Sports has arguably never been stronger.

the right example. If you don't have the right people you can attract the wrong elements.

"I remember Matt Reardon years ago making it quite clear that we won't accept 'dickheads'. I think bringing in 'Club, Team, Player' as our mantra has been enormous and really pushing that has worked.

"Some people may not like it but they understand that the club comes first, team

consistent and stand our ground, although it's not completely in black and white and we consider exceptional circumstances.

"I came into a club with my six year old son Josh (14 Years/207 Games, and was the Col Sutton Award Recipient in 2014), and what Steve and Bev Sullivan, John Young and Boris Mitchell and others were doing. the board at that stage was very good. When the transition on the board happened, I was quite confident with the people

fielded at that crucial age bracket of eleven to fifteen when it is so easy for teens to be distracted so greatly by technology rather than being outdoors doing something athletic in a team environment and having to be committed to turn up to training and bond with others in a team atmosphere. Hills fielded 19 league teams in that age bracket. They were: under-11 - three boys plus one League Tag; under-12 - three boys teams; under 13 - four boys, one



League Tag; under-14 – three boys, one girls team; under-15 – two boys and a League Tag side. Providing them with a safe and healthy environment, in which they can enjoy their sport and develop as young people on and off the field, is a responsibility Hills Bulls take seriously.

A glance through the 2022 yearbook’s team reports, from those that did not make the finals as well as the victories, provides a telling testament of that. Among comments that took the eye were:

Under-11 (3) coach Andrew Odell:
“Unfortunately the boys lost the grand final 30 to 24 after Rouse Hill scored the match winner with five seconds left on the clock. Despite the tough loss in the grand final, the boys played some great footy throughout of the year with their tough defence and line speed winning them a number of games. It was great to see the boys enjoying their football and having fun during both games and training.”

Under-12 (2) coach Ziad Elkass: “This year’s 12

(2s) division was very competitive, with most teams towering over our boys in size, however it only spurred the team on to produce their best footy. This was evident at the start of the season when the boys went undefeated for the first half of the competition. The boys’ defence was a standout this year; it was brutal, the boys were capable of tackling the biggest kids without fear. It’s what won them many of their games. It was a fantastic effort by the boys to make it to the second week of the finals.”

Under-14 (1) coach Isaac Gorman: “Being new to this age group and not seeing these boys play footy before, I was blown away by their skills and rugby league knowledge. Not just in the first division, but across this whole age group. From then on, we knew this year could be very special. This must be one of the most rewarding years of rugby league I have been involved in.

“This group of men will forever be known as the giant killers.

“Until the halfway point of the season we

were up and down but knowing the ability, work ethic and determination of this group, we as a coaching staff knew that they had what it took to win this comp. But it had to come down to the boys self-belief that they could do it, and credit to them it was an absolute pleasure to watch them build and build as a group and it was unreal to get to

see them play some incredible rugby league.

“Coming in at fourth spot with a five-team semi-final competition, we knew we had to go about success the long way, but we talked about it, and the boys were very keen for the challenge ahead with the utmost confidence of success. We went on to beat 5th, 3rd, 2nd and eventually finally beating 1st place, Wenty, at Wenty in the grand final.

“To see how happy not only the boys were, but also how proud of themselves they were of what they had achieved. It was a great moment for us as coaches to be a part of something so special that this team achieved.

“To my coaching staff Aaron and Bailey, thanks so much once again for your commitment and support and helping me out with absolutely

everything I couldn’t be more grateful.

“To the boys. Thank you. I’m sure whatever you achieve on the football field or in life I’m sure you will all be successful, such an incredibly respectful, hard-working group and you are all an absolute credit to your families. Always remember, ‘PSYCHO’, attention to detail and plenty of ENO.”

Under 14 girls coach Michael Withers:

“Our season started well, and we improved so much with every game we played and by the end of the season we were the team that everyone was worried about. We played against teams that had played together for five years in some cases and were 30kgs heavier than our girls. We beat the premiers

who had only lost one game in five years. That was very much a highlight of our season.”

Certainly, 2022 left a huge sense of achievement with many within the Hills Bulls fraternity, judging by the comments of those at the coalface. One such person is Tracey Marshall, a member of a family that is exceedingly devoted and committed to the club. She



summarised the season with this: “To witness, in 2022, Hills Bulls winning every junior award with Parramatta district shows the devotion to development that the club invests back into grassroots. Another proud achievement has been watching the senior rugby league competition become stronger through our Sydney Shield and Ron Massey Cup teams from the many years of support shown by members of the club such as Paul Griffin, Mick Gremmo, Michael Withers and Aaron Gonzalez to eventually winning the 2022 Ron Massey Cup.”

Perhaps Mark Mahoney best summed up the formula that led to a record 2022. “It’s true testament of the place and the people in it. People come here every weekend, and their kids haven’t played here for 20 years and they are still here to watch our teams. You can say they’re cliches - ‘Once a Bull, Always a Bull’ and ‘Club, Team, Player’ but they are statements that are lived here. My kids haven’t played here for years but I’m still on the board and running around the place ... simply because I love it here. And plenty of others share the feeling!”



THE BULLS' GREATEST SEASON



CHAPTER 5 **RUNNING WITH THE BEARS**

HILLS BULLS- NORTH SYDNEY FEEDER SYSTEM

If ever Hills Bulls players have wondered about the benefit of the feeder club relationship with North Sydney Bears, it became clear during the 2021 National Rugby League season.

were in turn a feeder team for South Sydney Rabbitohs through Norths' NSW Cup team. In 2019, they moved to link with Sydney Roosters.

The basic concept is that Norths can feed players into the NRL from outside of their associated NRL club's 35-contracted player system but more importantly are strengthened by NRL squad members who drop back when

feeder system. Having said that, it is difficult to reach that level and many star teenagers will go directly into NRL club 'development player' status and then into full-time professionalism. But the NRL has seen many late bloomers come through the state leagues. And Ron Massey Cup gives a playing field for those below NRL or reserve grade level to still enjoy a high

PLAYERS ASPIRING TO PLAY

The Bulls and the Bears launched the association in 2016 and, despite a two-season break when Norths decided to revert to just one feeder club and remained with their local junior league club Asquith (Hills were their second), the relationship has been strong. At first the Bears, the NSWRL foundation club in 1908 who were evicted from the NRL season in 1999,

not selected. The same system works between Norths and the Hills, up and down through NSW Cup to Ron Massey Cup. Additionally, Hills juniors who are not selected for Parramatta's junior representative teams have a pathway to the traditionally not as strong North Sydney under-age rep teams. Ideally, they can see a pathway up the ladder into the NRL through this

standard of play and earn handy income too.

The philosophy is to have players aspiring to play Sydney Shield then Ron Massey Cup for the Bulls and then feed into the Bears and enter the shop window of not only Norths but other NRL clubs.



And 2021 provided the example for Hills Bulls when Ben Thomas and Ben Marschke, who entered the feeder system as signing for Hills and not North Sydney (neither were Hills juniors however), found themselves wearing Sydney Roosters jerseys via impressive performances after being elevated to the Bears' NSW Cup team. Thomas played four games off the interchange bench (and another in 2022) and is still contracted to the Roosters while Marschke played 13 NRL matches in 2021 (seven starting, six from the bench) including a semi-final against Manly Sea Eagles.

In 2024, Norths will become a feeder to Melbourne Storm which gives another option for Hills' budding NRL players.

"It's a good relationship which has certainly proved beneficial to Hills," said club president Michael Gremmo.

"We still have an extremely strong association with Parramatta and our alignment is still first with Parramatta at the junior level but in a

monetary sense, it makes sense for us to have the feeder relationship with North Sydney and their players come back to us in the Ron Massey Cup. It saves us having to buy players at that higher, more expensive level, with Bears players instead dropping back to strengthen our squad and ensure we are competitive.

"If players come back dragging their feet or

spitting the dummy because they are not in Norths' 18 that weekend, and that can happen at any club, we put our foot down. If they don't want to wear our jersey with pride, we don't want them. Our culture is too strong for that to be compromised.

"Most NRL clubs use the NSW Cup to blood young players against the men

but for foundation clubs Newtown Jets and North Sydney, it's their top team and they want to win NSW Cup."

Season 2023 is the fifth and final year of the second-phase agreement with the Bears but both clubs have given every indication they want the relationship to continue.

And it has a strong personal connection too.

a former Parramatta junior who has invested wholeheartedly in the association with Hills.

He conducts occasional training sessions at the club, has regular discussions with the Massey Cup coach every week during the season and attends all Ron Massey Cup games when the Bears' schedule does not clash. Other times he ensures he sees video of all games he cannot watch live.

invested in them, and the relationship with Hills.

"The attitude of those guys who go back to Hills is tremendous and hopefully they can help set a higher standard at Hills training when they come back for one session a week.

"It was awesome to watch Hills win the grand final last year and it was so good for our guys to be part of it. For me there's

a personal connection too because I kicked my first ever goal at Crestwood when I was in the under-7s playing for Ashcroft.

"The pathway for young Bulls players wanting to make their way through to the top, as I did when I was a kid, is really clear. I know they are essentially Parramatta juniors but Norths provide a second pathway through junior reps

THE PATHWAY FOR YOUNG BULLS

Norths CEO Gareth Holmes lives in the area and has a long association with the Eels NRL and junior levels, having been a development officer then general manager of football during 15 years with the Eels. And North Sydney NSW Cup coach Jason Taylor, the Bears' point scoring record holder and former Wests Tigers and South Sydney NRL head coach, is

"We have a 30-man plus squad at training with us each week and then some go back and play for Hills, with a lot of them genuine possibilities of playing in our side in the NSW Cup. It's one thing to see them at training but it's just as important to watch them on game day, and the Hills players too, so I try to get to as many games. And I think it is important that I am



to our feeder system, connected to whatever NRL club we are with, which will be Melbourne Storm in 2024 – a consistently successful NRL club.”

The fact that North Sydney has a smaller junior league than Parramatta (which runs its reserve grade side through Wentworthville in the NSW Cup), although numbers are increasing with over 1700 in 2023, the Bulls’ link is beneficial for Norths too. If Hills juniors are not selected in the Eels’ Harold Matthews (under-17) and SG Ball (under-19) squads, they can be picked up by Norths. Despite such a strong club as Hills Bulls often dominating the Eels junior reps selections in recent years, the club has also provided many players to Norths, Harold Mathew Cup and the SG Ball teams, so the association has certainly provided a healthy extra pathway.

Gareth Holmes says the close relationship is tremendously valuable for the Bears.

“I think it works very well for both clubs and I’d like to think the people involved have a lot to do with that,” he said. “During my 15 years at Parramatta I was quite close to Bulls and what I liked about Hills is that it is one of the

bigger clubs but is so professionally managed and the board and people involved are good at promoting the juniors and pathways.

“That’s a real level of comfort for me knowing what I was dealing with – how professional and successful they have been but also supportive of junior pathways, and the fact I’d known the Gremmos for a while.

“The link has been successful for us, being able to send players who are not in JT’s playing squad back to an environment that we know is well run and to a team that is definitely competitive. And it’s good for the Bulls, as shown by the premiership last year with five of our players in their team regularly.

“And JT is really invested into players who go back and forward, has formed a good relationship with Hills players, ensures there is a lot of information sharing including playing structures and sits on bench to watch the Bulls when he can. He remains invested in seeing the development of players who might drop back to Massey Cup.”



RUNNING WITH THE BEARS



CHAPTER 6 **TAKING ON THE RICH BOYS**

SENIOR (SEMI-PROFESSIONAL) RUGBY LEAGUE 2011-23

The Bulls' grand final success in the Ron Massey Cup in 2022 was 32 years of hope, hiatus and heartache in the making. During

part of life for many in the Hills shire. The semi-professional players may get paid and in recent years some North Sydney Bears NRL hopefuls have bolstered the local talent. Yet there is still a family atmosphere at Crestwood Reserve with Bulls juniors watching and dreaming of one day playing on the same stage, men against men, and many long-time Hills supporters getting together to maintain or renew friendships

though we had made it to two grand finals. Hills returned to the semi-professional arena in 2012 but with little success and, the admission in hindsight, with only half-hearted commitment. The first season saw few victories, and Hills finished in last place. Many within the club suggested retreating and going back to local A-grade as the Bulls'

SENIOR FOOTY AT THE BULL PIT

that time Hills showed they could punch well above their weight against poker machine money-fuelled clubs but, in their fourth grand final appearance in Sydney metropolitan wide competition, that September afternoon at Kogarah Jubilee Oval showed the mighty Bulls could deliver the knock-out punch as well.

Sunday senior footy at the Bull Pit has become

spawned by their involvement in the club.

There is no doubting there had been some reticence among those involved in the club's administration about the logic of playing at this level and the financial demands it brings to a junior-based club with no leagues club backing. That's why Hills Bulls' six-season venture into the Metropolitan Cup from 1990-95 ended, even

highest senior level but a player from the Metro Cup era of the 90s, who was concerned promising local players would again be picked off by other clubs if they could see no pathway past local A-grade (which at times was under threat itself of a viable future), which had been the case for much of the previous decade.



That man was Paul Griffin, who is rightly regarded by many as the ‘Godfather of Senior Football’. ‘Griffo’ as he is referred to by all, had his career cut short in 1994 after he was hit by a car on Showground Rd, Castle Hill on Melbourne Cup day and, after being brought back to life by paramedics at the scene, spent four weeks in hospital, two of them in a coma.

After recovering, he developed a passion for coaching. He took on the role with teams of many age groups and with several players who have gone onto NRL careers and would vouch for his positive influence on them.

Not only did Griffo provide much needed sponsorship through his company Griffin Air Conditioning, he arm-wrestled several of his suppliers to also back the team, then he took on the coaching job, building a new support staff before calling on former players and his network around the game to recruit new players to the club – all in the name of a resurgence in 2013 when few others could see it happening.

‘Griffo’ believed strongly Hills had to compete at a higher level than local A-grade and give their talented juniors something more to aspire to – but to do that, the most senior side had to be better than easy-pickings for the rich clubs.

“The club wanted to go back to A-grade as its senior team and I said ‘no, that would be going backwards’,” he reflected.

“I honestly believe that without senior footy your club is missing something. We were losing players and at one stage we had no A-grade even and we were going backwards as a lot of players would go elsewhere to play A-grade. Not everyone is going to play NRL but we need to give them a pathway to continue playing just below that level. We were losing kids around 16, many going to Wenty because they could see a pathway there. That doesn’t happen as much anymore.”

And Griffo is one of those blokes who is willing to put his money, his time, and his heart and soul behind what he says.

“I was willing to get stuck in and make it happen and fortunately I had a lot of really good help,” he said. “Every Saturday night we’d be at the Fiddler (hotel at Rouse Hill) raising funds with meat raffles. The biggest help was the fact our wives got behind us as well (on Saturday nights). I drew on a lot of my suppliers. Others came on board as trainers or helped out in other areas. Guys like Dave Curran, Doug Jones, Josh Curran, trainers and managers. (Head trainer) Dave Grech been there since day dot. We’ve become extremely good mates, Grechy and I.

“A lot of them whose sons I used to coach came aboard and stuck with me. A majority of us still get together now and are very good friends, as are our partners.

“We’ve made it an event to come down to Crestwood on Sundays and watch; make it like the old days. We have a DJ, jumping castle, get families along and make it a good afternoon out for family and club supporters and that was how it was back in the day.

“And the number of juniors we have coming through now, through A-grade, Sydney Shield and Massey, is fantastic.”

Hills Sports secretary Rick Palin says the club needed someone of Paul Griffin’s ilk to not just rekindle senior footy but make it successful. A decade on, that component of the club is self-sufficient and at times has sunk funds back into the juniors, proving the doom-sayers’ view that it would be a financial burden on the club to have had false concerns.

“We needed someone like Griffo to use his connections and involvement to get the minds of the players and supporters behind such a team,” Rick said. “You need funding and the right support. Junior teams without leagues club backing can’t move into a semi-professional competition usually unless they have extraordinary support. But Griffo, through his connections and mates, was able to build a great sponsorship base and attract a lot of friends and people within

the community to support it and then he put blokes from the paddock on the field. “I was a big backer of Griffo and Sydney Shield even though there was obviously some board concern. As it turned out, in some years our senior teams have not just self-funded but put money back into the club with an operating surplus. So it hasn’t been a negative impact on the club.”

Many within the club were obviously nervous when it entered a team in the Sydney Shield in the winter of 2013 while outsiders gave Hills little chance of being competitive. After big losses to rich heavyweights Wentworthville, Cabramatta and Auburn, those opinions had changed little midway through the first round. But as combinations and confidence grew, the indication of improvement came in the return matches after a four-point victory over Mounties. Hills avenged the earlier 30-point loss to Wenty with a four-point victory, away at Ringrose Park. The Bulls then travelled to



Cabramatta and turned around a first round 48-point loss with a 20-point victory. Auburn fell to the growing Bulls belief at Crestwood and Griffo's boys became semi-finalists, and not just token finalists either. They beat Cabramatta 30-14 before bowing out with a heartbreaking 41-40 golden point loss to Mounties away.

The following season the Sydney Shield side just missed the finals after being in the top eight for all but the last two weeks of the competition rounds but heartache came in a much larger dose the following year, 2015, the year Hills began an association with North Sydney as an affiliate/feeder club to the Bears who in turn had struck a relationship with South Sydney Rabbitohs, fielding Souths' NSW Cup side under the Bears' banner. The Bears had a similar connection to Hills' with North Sydney league club Asquith.

Hills had a wonderful season which began with five successive victories but a form slump hit before the Bulls won their last three to finish

in fifth place, only one competition point behind three teams ahead of them, but with the belief they could make an imprint well into the finals. And they had an extra inspiration to win the big prize – to honour their popular ball boy and member of the club's patriarchal family, Nathan Gremmo, who died earlier in the season after being hit by a car. The players had the words

'Straya Pride' (which Nathan had written on his arm the day of his accident) embroidered on their playing jerseys, along with #Gremmo 7 in honour of their little mate. They also developed the call 'Gremmo' as a prompt to dig in under pressure on the field, a call to arms that is still prevalent today.

The campaign began with a 38-8 victory over Guildford in the quarter-final at Leichhardt Oval, followed by an equally impressive 30-24 win

against Mounties at Belmore Sports Ground with winger Aaron Weston scoring four tries. The Bulls came out firing, scoring tries from each of their first four sets of possession and leading 28-0 and then 30-14 at half-time before defending for much of the second half and coming away with a 32-28 victory. This ensured a return to Leichhardt for the preliminary final against northern beaches'

side Peninsula who had beaten Hills in both encounters earlier in the season. When it mattered most, the Bulls prevailed, scoring a try in the final 30 seconds to secure a 26-18 victory, meaning Hills were into a grand final in a metropolitan competition featuring far wealthier opponents for the third time in 11 seasons at that level.

The final minutes were frantic. One winger, Aaron Weston, had to be replaced due to an ankle injury and the other, Anthony Overton, suffering bad cramp, lost possession as struggled to play the ball (then went off the field) and Wenty took advantage, gaining possession and scoring the match-sealing try in the next set as the

THE FINAL MINUTES WERE FRANTIC



A large boisterous section of Bulls supporters filled part of Parramatta Stadium's western grandstand to cheer on their top side against arch-rivals and minor premiers Wentworthville. Their hopes were fuelled when the Bulls took a 16-0 early lead and were still in command at half-time, leading 16-4. Wenty fought their way back into the clash at 16-14 before Hills scored a converted try to make it 22-14.

Bulls had back-rowers on their wings. Errors in possession proved to be costly with Wenty scoring two tries in the final 10 minutes. Before then, Hills looked to be in control. It was a heartbreaking experience for Hills players, coaching staff and the hundreds of supporters there to encourage them onto victory.

TAKING ON THE RICH BOYS





“At half-time we spoke about getting our defence back on track - hit, stick and control the ruck and the ball,” said coach Griffin in the 2015 annual report. “Simple errors cost us again and we let Wenty back into it and in the final minutes we just couldn’t finish it off.”

Popular and much-respected head trainer David Grech revealed the emotion of the day with, “I could not believe the scenes that I saw with seven bays packed to the rafters with Bulls supporters as we ran out on to the pitch. The game was not what we wanted. After leading 16-0 at half-time, we lost 26-22 which devastated so many as we wanted to do it for Nathan and the Gremmo family.”

The following year the Bulls made the tough, but what has proved a successful decision, to add a second team to the semi-professional scene by entering a Ron Massey Cup side, meaning Hills were represented in the third and fourth levels of rugby league in the country. Paul Griffin stepped up to take

over the Massey side with his co-coach Bulls stalwart Mark Mahoney. Former Canberra first grader Trevor Schodel took on the Sydney Shield team for the next two seasons.

Among the signings for the inaugural Massey Cup season were Tim Robinson, who had returned from the NRL system (27 first grade games for the Sea Eagles and Sharks) and headed to the club at age 26 to begin a stint at Crestwood which saw him become an inspirational leader over the next seven seasons. Another was organising halfback James Boustani from Wentworthville

While the Sydney Shield team missed the finals by just two competition points, the Massey Cup boys - after losing four of their first five matches - made the top eight and overturned an 18-6 half-time lead to beat Burwood 44-18 in the quarter-final but their season ended a week later with a 48-0 loss to Mounties who went on to win the premiership.

In 2017 Heath L'Estrange, a Bulls junior who went onto play 193 top grade games in Australia (Roosters, Sea Eagles and Dragons) and England (Bradford Bulls) and won a grand final for Manly with fellow Hills junior Jamie Buhrer, rejoined Hills. Tongan international Feleti Mateo (206 NRL games for the Eels, Warriors and Sea Eagles) was also recruited. Having L'Estrange back in the fold - his family has a prominent place in the club's history - was particularly pleasing and, typically, he put up his hand to coach the Sydney Shield team in 2018, with Mateo his assistant, while still playing in the Cup. Heath had made 16 NRL appearance for St George Illawarra in 2016 and was still only 28 when he returned to Crestwood to put something back into his former club and he certainly led from the front, winning the Ron Massey Cup's competition player of the year award.

The Bulls again made the finals after a great start to the season (five wins from six games) and still finished third despite winning only

four of their last nine. An embarrassing loss to Wentworthville in the semi-final (12-46) was not a good start to the final series. Losing L'Estrange for the elimination final against Auburn did not auger well but the Bulls showed a lot of character to go down by only two points, 24-22. Still the season could be seen as successful and the performance of halfback Chad O'Donnell, second in the competition's points-scoring list, saw him gain a contract with Penrith Panthers.

Those first two seasons in the Massey Cup set up a proud record for the Bulls. In eight seasons, (up to 2022, update), we have made the finals (and were headed that way when the 2021 season was abandoned with our Massey Cup and Sydney Shield sides running second) in all but one season - 2018. There were circumstances that contributed to that one poor year - a change of coach in January after more than two months of pre-season training, a horrific injury run which saw players having to back up from Sydney Shield and play a second match in Cup on the same day late

in the season, and a split from the association with North Sydney, again announced in the 11th hour. The Bears had feeder associations with Asquith and Hills, farming their squad members back to both, but decided to have an allegiance only with local club Asquith. The relationship was reinstated in 2020, with Hills striking a relationship directly with the Rabbitohs in the interim season of 2019.

Paul Griffin can also look back on a proud record during that period too. From 2012 up to 2018 when he passed over the Massey Cup reins to Michael Withers (2013-15 Sydney Shield, 2016-17 Massey Cup - he shared the role with Trevor Schodel in 2018), his sides played in the finals five times.

Withers, the seasoned NRL and Super League player who had successfully coached the Hills C-grade side to three premierships and had had experience as coach of Western Academy SG Ball and was an assistant with Parramatta and Penrith under-20s, took over



in 2019 and – with the benefit of the Norths relationship being restored (and Paul Griffin helping out) – lifted the side to a preliminary final appearance. Hills beat Guildford and Asquith in the first two semi-finals before going down to St Marys in the preliminary final.

In 2020 and '21, Covid, which threatened to close down the NRL competition and saw the demise of many junior competitions, interrupted the Sydney Shield and Ron Massey Cup leagues too. After just one round, both competitions were abandoned but after several weeks' break and composite statewide competition was established with some country teams and Massey Cup sides combining to form President's Cup for an eight round plus finals season. Hills found themselves competing against Western Rams from Forbes, Maitland, West Illawarra, Thirroul, Dubbo and Sydney teams Glebe, Wentworthville and North Sydney.

After five wins and three losses (all by six points or less), Hills finished fourth and took on minor

premiers Maitland in the semi-final. The Bulls put up a character-filled effort before going down 16-14. Maitland went onto win the competition. Hills continued to show they were among the best in that company the following year and, like the Sydney Shield outfit, were placed second on the ladder when the competitions were again abandoned because of Covid restrictions.

So it was 2022 before regular programming resumed. The Bulls went into the season with the handy pick-up of Wenty utility back Henry Raiwalui, who would go onto play for Fiji at the World Cup in Britain at that season's end, and hooker Brad Keighran from North Sydney, who would have an outstanding season.

They played major roles in a record season for the Bulls, with just one loss in 20 matches and none in the preliminary rounds. Grech again provides an insight into the wonderful run of 2022. "I was doing some rehab with Henry in the pre-season when I stated to him it was my 11th year and all I want is to win a competition, 'H' as



we know him said to me, 'Grechy I have come here for one thing and that's to ensure I help Hills win their first Ron Massey Cup and I promise you that we will win.' I was so excited that we had this player who came here for one thing and he was so adamant that we would win.

"We went through the season losing only one game and finishing as minor premiers. We were ambushed by Glebe, 38-10, in the major semi-final with the previous week off doing us no favours. The main issue to come out of the game was that 'BK' (Brad Keighran) was taken off the field in the first half with what seemed to be a very serious injury to his ankle, and we were confronted with a possible season-ending injury to our best performing player of the season thus far. As you could imagine there was devastation in the sheds at full-time but deep down we all knew we were not out of it and that we would have to regroup in the lead up to the next semi-final to get into our first grand final if we could beat our arch rival Wenty.



“With a good week at training and with a big crowd of Bull supporters at Ringrose Park, we knew that this game would not be easy especially without ‘BK’ who we were hoping could return if we made the grand final (which proved to be the case). We beat our arch rivals (22-12) and made our first grand final and, after our celebrations with the team and supporters who came in the shed and sung our song, the week began with some intense rehab for the team and ensuring BK was going to be OK to take the field. You could really see the experience of some of our senior boys with Tim Robinson, Taniela Lasalo, Henry Raiwalui and Jerry Key come through and help the younger boys as well as the coaching staff through what was a great week but also a nervous week.”

Hills led 18-6 at half-time after tries to prop Taniela Lasalo, halfback Blake Goodman, after a wonderful right-foot step and offload by centre Tui Afualo and five-eighth Raiwalui after he picked up a Glebe dropped ball and ran 30 metres to the line. Glebe got back to 18-12 and

dominated possession in the final 20 minutes with the call of ‘Gremmo’ being heard around Kogarah Oval as the Bulls desperately repelled several Glebe onslaughts to their line. Those there will remember winger Dion Narayan’s second crucial intercept and a decisive retreat to the in-goal to scoop up a dangerous kick, desperate goal-line defence, a massive hit in the final minutes by Coby Thomas, Raiwalui snapping up a chip kick that could have proved dangerous with two minutes to go and Tim Robinson grabbing another with 45 seconds remaining with the score still at 18-12.

Grech, head trainer since the return to senior footy in 2012 and who worked endlessly with the medical staff to get Kieran fit to play, again provides an emotional insider’s recollection of the day. “Robbo lead us out, down the long walk to the field, and we could hear the supporters chanting and clapping as we made our way down to the tunnel. I could not help it but tears and emotions were coming out and as we entered the field the roar of the Bulls



“With 79 minutes and 13 seconds to go, the Glebe halfback tried to kick and regather the ball when Robbo turned around and ran to the ball and jumped on it. And the crowd, My God, went wild as they knew as we all did all we had to do was hold the ball for 47 seconds and we would win. I remember Mick (Withers) yelling, ‘Grechy, get out there and tell them to hold the ball,’ so I ran on and was

it Dad, we did it.’ The celebrations began with everyone embracing and crying in happiness and I could not believe that after 11 years I have finally done it. I ran to (fiancée) Christine, who herself was crying in full emotion, as well as the crowd cheering.

“There was so many people I wanted to see but none more than Griffo, Aaron Gonzalez

TEARS AND EMOTIONS

supporters, was something I would not forget, even as I write this I can’t help but feel emotion.

“Glebe had most of the possession in the final 24 minutes. I could not really watch the last minutes as I was just watching the clock. Our defensive efforts were unbelievable in the second half by all our players and they busted their gut to ensure we did not lose this GF.

yelling whilst looking at the clock, ‘Hold the ball! Hold the ball!’ In that 47 seconds the crowd was chanting ‘Hills Bulls ... Hills Bulls.’ It was so loud I could not hear anything.

“That was it. We won. I just dropped to my knees with emotion when my boy Noah (ball boy) came up to me, pulling me off the ground, and he was crying, saying, ‘We did

and Mark (Mahoney). We have gone through so much to finally get this done and I can seriously say it was one of the best days of my life that will stay with me more ever.”

Coach Withers remembered, “We couldn’t set up a simple field goal to put the nail in the coffin but just defended so well. Lofie (Alofi Mataele) or Curtis Wilson made try saving tackle in the



corner and we were on their tryline for the last five minutes but couldn't get the field goal.

"It was very exciting. We knew all the club history, when Griffio was playing we went close, a few of my C graders played in the Sydney Shield final and I was there that day and there was a big crowd but we went down. Considering the people who have invested their own money and a lot of time, it was a big thing for them and so many others who come every week to watch; it was great for them to have their moment. When the siren went, you could see all the jubilation and plenty of tears. It was a wonderful moment.

"Tim Robinson had put in the effort and sacrificed plenty; he could have played somewhere else but he got the reward to finish like he did."

The historic premiership team was: Curtis Wilson; Maile Li, Alofi Mataele, Tui Afualo, Dion Narayan; Henry Raiwalui, Blake Goodman; Taniela Lasalo, Brad Keighran, Tim Robinson

(c), Steven Tavita, Jerry Key, Tyler Cassell.

Interchange: Eton Lindsay, Michael Fenn, Coby Thomas, Girodan Patea. Coach: Michael Withers.

It was also a special season for assistant coach Mark Mahoney, a wonderful servant of the club. Paul Griffin's assistant when the Bulls entered the Massey Cup in 2016, Mark was delighted when Michael Withers asked him to join his staff for 2022. "I hadn't coached for a number of years but Mick asked me to come down and give him a hand and I got a box seat helping out with coaching and imparting some of my knowledge I've learned over the years. It was very exciting and the whole year is something I'll remember forever. Three or four weeks before the 'GF' we got taught a lesson by Glebe but it was the best thing to happen to us; we were getting a bit ahead of ourselves which is human nature when you're having a runaway season. Mick made sure we ramped home that advantage.

"On grand final day, we weren't going to get beaten no matter what was thrown at us. You could see the resilience in the defensive attitude. Anyone can score tries when things are going well but the resolve when you're under the pump consistently is what matters and it was there to see. You could feel it. It was good to see what it meant to the players and the playing

staff and then you turn around at Kogarah Oval and you see a thousand screaming Hills fans from three-year-old kids to 50-60 year old men and women crying ... it was really special."

The Sydney Shield side had a successful year too, finishing third on the ladder but bowing out in the preliminary final. The Bulls went down 26-16 to St Marys in the major semi-

at CommBank Stadium as a curtain-raiser to the Penrith Panthers-Canterbury Bulldogs NSW Cup grand final but went down by 34-16.

A feature of the season was that success came with only five North Sydney players - Narayan, Thomas, Steven Tavita, Tyler Cassell and Michael Fenn - who played regularly and were in the grand final side, and three under-18s who were

RON MASSEY CUP VICTORY



final then 14-12 to Penrith Brothers in the final. St Marys went on to win the grand final.

As Ron Massey Cup premiers, Hills entered the revamped President's Cup to play against the Illawarra (southern conference), Newcastle (northern conference) and Forbes (western conference) premiers. The Bulls beat Collegians 26-16 to progress to the final against Maitland

promoted to the senior grades and performed well. The Bears relationship was certainly crucial but there was a large local flavour too which confirmed how far Hills Bulls had developed.

For Robinson, it was the perfect finish to a career that included 27 NRL games for Manly and Cronulla - but bitter-sweet. He joined the Bulls, at age 26 as he felt it was time to depart



the full-time NRL system and its demands and the lure of Hills was to join his older brother Chad (also a former NRL player who played for the Roosters in two grand finals and was in their 2002 premiership-winning squad) who had been invited by Paul Griffin to become his Massey Cup assistant coach for 2017. Tragically, Chad took his life in December 2016.

During the next six seasons 'Robbo' received numerous lucrative offers to join other clubs but says he was never tempted to leave Crestwood. "The financial benefits can't replace the mateship. They say this is a family club and I truly believe it. I wasn't going to leave this place to go somewhere else; I really didn't consider the other offers."

Robinson had experienced the ultimate victory at NRL and NSW Cup level and said a Massey winner's medal completed his set. He played 13 NRL games for Manly in 2011 and was in the all-star side through the final rounds up to the preliminary final before dropping out

of the grand final 17 for Clive Churchill Medal winner Glenn Stewart who returned from a three-game suspension. He was in the 2015 Sharks 'reserve grade' grand final victory against Windsor in a match that featured David Fifita, Chad Townsend, Tyrone Peachey (Sharks) and Matt Moylan, Wes Naiqama, Blake Austin and Cameron Ciraldo (Windsor).

"It was a really gritty win at Kogarah," he enthused. "I've got a photo from at the end of me walking off the field with my daughter (Zoe) on my shoulders; that was a very special moment and will have that photo forever". His son Spencer plays for the juniors.

"I was lucky to be involved with a premiership at all the levels I played and that sort of capped off my career. It was worth it to keep playing, for that moment and I will have that photo forever."



TAKING ON THE RICH BOYS





CHAPTER 7 LITTLE GREMMO, A TRAGIC LOSS

THE LEGACY OF NATHAN GREMMO AND HIS SHIELD

It's Sunday, July 2, 2023 and the crowd would build to around a thousand, comprising of current players and their families, locals who may or may not have had a direct Bulls

tissue donation, a difficult but vital topic that emanated, for the wider Bulls family, from a catastrophic event. But, with all the admirable intention of the organisers to make the subject of organ transplants the major emphasis, most attendees were there to pay tribute to 'Nath', the cheeky little Gremmo kid who tragically lost his life in 2015 at age 13 after being hit by

The Bulls had been down by 12 points twice in the match but had fought back to within four. The ball shifted to the right and after a brilliant chain of passes, winger Cameron Hall executed a spectacular leap into the air, à la any NRL try-scoring flanker, and planted the ball just inside the corner post, right in front of a group of Bulls officials and helpers,

THE IMPORTANT DAY

connection, plus a large gathering of old boys who had headed back to Crestwood Reserve to support a cause that was close to the hearts of many. To respect the event, the family that had done so much for so many, and to honour what the Nathan Gremmo Shield means.

The object of the important day on the Hills Bulls' calendar was to promote organ and

a car outside the family home in Glenhaven.

If anyone needed any examples of just how deeply the cause meant to the players that day, there were two – one played out before their eyes and another in the sanctuary of the dressing room.

The first came midway through the second half of the Sydney Shield game against Cabramatta.

standing almost within reach, that included club president and Nathan's dad Michael Gremmo.

Every single Bulls teammate rushed to the spot, leaping over Hall as if they had won a grand final; screaming in jubilation, with several yelling the words 'Gremmo ... Gremmo!' From that point, the Bulls controlled the match and went on to win 28-24.



The second moment was more private. Michael Gremmo had addressed the Ron Massey Cup team (as he had done earlier before the Shield match) about what the day was about; what it meant to the spirit of being a Bull. He'd also had a brief private session with the boys the previous Thursday, to educate them about what the 'Nath Shield' day was about. He will admit to being a little worried about whether the 2023 newcomers to the team, especially those who had filtered back from North Sydney Bears and who had no history with such a personal Bulls' motivation, would adopt to the occasion. Among those newcomers were two who are familiar to NRL fans – NSW Blues centre James 'Jimmy the Jet' Roberts, playing his third game for the Bulls, and big prop Martin Kennedy, who had come out of retirement and was in the Bears' squad but had been pushed back to wear a Bulls jersey for just the sixth time.

'Gremmo' need not have worried. Just before the team were to leave their dressing room to take on the Fijian side, Kaiviti Silktails, Kennedy gathered his teammates around him. He emotionally brought up the well-publicised ordeals he'd had to navigate in his life (which included time in jail) and powerfully articulated that whatever he, and what his teammates, might have encountered, they were nothing compared to what the Gremmo family had had to endure. He may have been an unlikely source of such passion but he proved he was certainly a man of his word. Kennedy scored two tries and was a runaway players' player award winner as the Bulls won 38-6 to leapfrog the Silktails into fifth place with their second straight win which came after four successive losses.

Of course, the Nathan Gremmo Shield has grown to be more than an afternoon at the footy that draws more than the usual emotion and attendance because it is in honour of the chirpy teenager (and his family just as much) who wore the number seven jersey in the juniors since when he was old enough to do so, and primarily a promotion of organ donation that has grown enormously in its reach and recognition. Former teammates, schoolmates, Bulls old boys, young boys and extended Gremmo family members including mother Kylie and sisters Ashley and Annaliese, grandfather Mick, uncles David, Andrew and Richard and aunty Melissa were among those in the Bull Pit, filling most of the concrete terrace area. The name Gremmo has been synonymous with the words Hills Bulls since day one when Michael senior was a driving force behind the club's foundation. Michael

jnr, Richard, Andrew and David all played and coached at the Bulls and Nathan's cousins Jett, Koby and Rapahel currently play for the club. Nathan, who attended his first NRL grand final as a four year old, loved his family, animals, Fiji and all things sporting - especially rugby league. Nathan was hit by a car while crossing the road on April 30, 2015, and passed away from his critical injuries the next day. It rocked not just the club but the wider Hills community and Oakhill College where Nathan was a popular student. More than 3000 are estimated to have attended his service at the college with the basketball stadium overflowing into the grandstand and standing areas outside. It was the second such tragedy to shock the Hills Bulls club. Many will remember losing outstanding front row prospect, 17-year-old Michael Green, in 1988 after a work accident.

The teenager, who had played 267 games for the club, was seen as an emerging elite talent; he had already earned a Parramatta Eels scholarship and the Eels were contemplating adding him to their under-20s squad at age 17. The Michael Green Trophy is vied for each year; it is awarded for outstanding contributions by mini and mod players. Like Nathan Gremmo, he will be honoured in perpetuity. The Gremmo family devotion to organ and tissue donation was spurred from an unexpected conversation prompted by Nathan weeks before his tragic death. He had watched a TV documentary on organ transplants and how the recipients often took on some characteristics of their donors. He was greatly fascinated and spruiked the fact of how important organ donation was. When the incomprehensible happened and

Nathan was on life support in Westmead Hospital, Michael, Kylie, Annaliese and Ashley conferred after talking with doctors and agreed to donate Nathan's organs to help others in dire need. Six lives were saved, including an infant child. That selfless gesture was the start of an inspirational legacy Nathan Gremmo has left behind. He had touched many with his always buoyant and respectful personality and surprised even more with the memory he has left. The Gremmo wider family have long been involved in raising funds for their local community and have, with little fanfare, been the backbone of many projects through donations, offering building services and through other means. Knowing that more than 1600 people in Australia on any given day are



waiting for transplants to save their lives, they came up with the idea of Jersey Day to raise awareness of donor and tissue transplanting, using Nathan's tragic story of losing his life but saving six others as example of its importance.

The idea of people wearing footy jerseys to depict their support and why the annual event is called Jersey Day is explained by Richard Gremmo. "The jersey represents a team which has a common cause. It was perfect to relay the message." A specific yellow jersey with a blue 'V' was designed (and is available through Hills Bulls Sports' and My Sports Tape websites). With the Gremmos being enthusiastic (and frustrated?) Parramatta Eels fans, there seems no coincidence in the colour selection.

Before Jersey Day was instigated on the Friday before Father's Day 2015, Nathan's legacy already had a prominent place beyond his junior footy mates but within the Hills Bulls senior teams that Nathan loved serving as ball boy. The players learned that Nathan

had written on his arm the day he had his terrible accident the words 'Straya Pride' which those who knew him say typified his love of his country. His family only noticed this when Nathan was in hospital and also saw a drawing of the southern cross logo.

The 2015 Sydney Shield players decided to write 'Straya Pride' on the front of their jerseys and asked the club if they could also have embroidered '#Gremmo7' (reflecting the jersey number Nathan wore in his Hills' teams). Both remain today on the kit of the Sydney Shield and Ron Massey Cup in recognition of their little mate. A further tribute came in the players deciding to adopt the 'Gremmo' call as a prompt for extra effort when under pressure on the field.

Nathan would be proud as much as surprised by the recognition because he is a Gremmo, and they find it uncomfortable to be celebrated for what they see as their basic community duty.

Jersey Day was initially scheduled for the annual home clash against Guildford in September 2015 and a big roll up of supporters showed the support and respect for Nathan and his family. The local event has progressively grown enormously.

What initiated as a local forum to promote organ donation awareness has touched many around the nation and even some overseas who wear their jerseys and promote the cause on social media. Sport and TV celebrities have supported it over the years (many images are on the Jersey Day website) including children's entertainment icons The Wiggles, champion horse trainer Chris Waller, rugby league champions Paul Vautin, Greg Inglis, Andrew Johns, Brad Fittler and Nathan Hindmarsh, former Test cricket captain Steve Waugh, ex-world surfing champion Mick Fanning, politicians including former Prime Minister Scott Morrison and his treasurer Josh Frydenberg plus media celebrities Tim

Gilbert, James Bracey and Ray Warren.

Many schools in the Hills district wear jerseys to school on a selected day as well, particularly Oakhill College and St Michael's Primary School at Baulkham Hills which Nathan (and his father and uncles) attended.

Guildford dropped out of Ron Massey Cup during the Covid interruptions to sport in Australia in 2020, so Dubbo CYMS – playing against Hills in the alternate competition called President's Cup - were the opponents that year. Blacktown Workers became the regular Jersey Day opponents in 2021 but they too dropped out of Massey Cup after last season so the Fijian team, Kaiviti Silktales, stepped in to promote Jersey Day this year. It's an appropriate move as Nathan's favourite holiday destination was Fiji.

The affection for Nathan (who would have turned 22 on June 22, 2023) by so many, and the attachment to his memory and the desire to have his family's back, was

overwhelmingly palpable on this particular day. And there was a special connection within the winning Sydney Shield side.

Firstly, there was ball boy Noah Grech who had carried out the role alongside Nathan, the hero and mentor of a seven-year-old Noah in 2015. He still has a photo of his "big brother" Nath on his bedroom wall. "I just loved him," Noah said. "He was the best person to be around. It's special for everyone today, a big day for the club." His father David, trainer for the senior teams since 2012, added. "It's an exciting day, good to remember Nath but very emotional, especially when we walk out of the sheds and line up. He was a very big part of our team and Noah loved him so much."

Halfback Jake Forbes played with Nathan for three years from under-12s to 14s, years he describes as the best of his life. This was the first time he had played Sydney Shield on the day that honours his mate.



“It was pretty intense when it all happened, especially being young; it took everyone by surprise,” Jake said. “Today is a very emotional one for me; I am so happy to get the win. I had a bit of a moment at the end when I was quite emotional, especially as it was the first time I’d played on Gremmo Day and being very close to him. Obviously there was a part of me thinking that I wish he was here playing beside me but it was good to celebrate what the day means though.”

Winger Isaac Gorman has played Sydney Shield for seven seasons but this was his first Gremmo Shield win. He took over the coaching of Nathan’s old team, when he was 20, two years after his passing, at Michael’s request. They won three successive grand finals and Isaac has been coaching at the Hills ever since.

“This club is a massive family and you just think of (Michael) Gremmo and how passionately he speaks about not only the club, and how close we are, and our bond; everyone thrives off it.

Everyone has so much respect for that bloke and that radiates throughout the whole club.

“We were down two tries but we found that inspiration and we fought to get a win. It doesn’t matter who you are or where you come from it’s about wearing that Bulls jersey. A few of us will never forget that try in the corner, right where a lot of Bulls people were.

“I’ve got a special connection to Mick, he asked me to take over the team with one of my best mates Hayden McWilliams, who was playing here at the time. One of the boys who was halfback was Jake Forbes and I was able to play with him today in honour of Nath.

“They still chat about Nathan, that’s important for the club. His picture is above the door as we walk out and I never run onto the field without touching it. I love this club massively.

No matter what changes or happens in your life, this club is always a constant, especially in your formative years, and always has your back.”

Sadly, Nathan’s death was not the only tragedy to hit the Gremmo family. Michael and his siblings lost their mother Elaine to cancer at the age of 48 in 1992. Like Nathan, Elaine and hard-working concrete truck driver Mick (snr), still a sprightly Bulls supporter, have passed on a positive legacy of how life should be lived. Said Michael Gremmo: “We’ve always been involved with helping people less fortunate. That’s just something our family has always tried to do and it came from our parents and has rubbed off to the children and grandchildren.”

The message of Nathan’s sister Annaliese, now 20, on the Jersey Day website (jerseyday.com.au) is a powerful and loving one. It includes: “1,600 people waiting... waiting for their lives to be saved by a hero. I am the extremely proud sister of organ donor Nathan Gremmo. On 30 April 2015 our perfectly normal family life was shattered when my brother passed away in a car accident. Life will never be the same without him. Six lives were saved as a result of Nathan’s generous gift.

“Whilst we were in hospital, organ donation was the easiest decision that I helped to make. We needed something good to come out of this horrible tragedy. Could you imagine being on dialysis 12 hours a day, being injected daily with insulin, having lungs that didn’t work properly making you feel like you’re drowning or having a heart so damaged that it could stop beating at any second? We are lucky in Australia to have amazing organ transplant teams with doctors, nurses and research units that save lives. In 2014 a total of 1,193 people received the gift of life from 378 donors.

“World class facilities that have achieved some of the best transplant outcomes in the world; However only 50 percent of eligible families agreed to donate their loved ones organs. This leaves over 1600 people on a lifesaving waiting list. I’m here today to encourage people to think about and discuss tissue and organ donation.

“Our family has endured the cruellest possible circumstances. I can only think that if our circumstances were reversed

and Nathan was desperate for an organ donation we would move heaven and earth to save my brother. However, the reality is that we would be waiting for a generous organ donor family to save Nathan’s life.

“I believe we all should live our lives the same way as my brother did, with his selfless, caring and respectful nature.

“Nathan’s last Instagram post only hours before his tragic accident was: “YOU ONLY LIVE ONCE, BUT IF YOU DO IT RIGHT, ONCE IS ENOUGH”

There is no doubt at all Nathan Gremmo lived up to his own words



CHAPTER 8 OZTAG

HOW THE HILLS BECAME THE STATE'S BEST

When Leon Don had the idea to establish an Oztag competition in 2010 as part of the Hills Bulls' operation, he would have had no concept of just how large and how successful it would

to wane and, to the Bulls' displeasure after providing \$15,000 towards an upgrade of the lighting at Kellyville Park, touch footy's venue, the fields were allocated elsewhere.

Another hard-working Bulls man, Steve Marks, had been the backbone of touch football but could no longer dedicate the many hours he had been devoting, so the junior touch

league'. Within a year, Oztag (through founder/owner Perry Haddock) was knocking on Hills Bulls' door offering a franchise.

And the rest is history. Playing under the banner of Baulkham Hills Oztag, the Bulls have become a super-power of the sport.

There was no animosity from Steve Marks and he takes his hat off to the effort Leon Don

THE TIMING WAS PERFECT

become. Thirteen years later, Hills – relative minnows compared to other clubs/franchises who have been competing for three decades or more – are the New South Wales champions.

The timing was perfect as it turned out for Leon and those who supported him. The longtime Bulls servant saw that junior touch football participation was starting

footy was disbanded, just as Leon decided to launch the Oztag pilot at Crestwood as an opportunity for local kids to play a competitive sport and keep fit and active in summer, outside the regular rugby league season.

He received no response when he initially contacted Oztag Australia so set up a virtual 'rebel' competition which was called 'summer

has committed to Oztag, and the success the move has created. "Unfortunately I did not have the right type of nine-to-five job that allowed me time for the junior touch competition, so we closed that off for the 2011 season," Steve said. "Thankfully, 2010 had also seen the inaugural and well supported and organised 'summer league' competition



started by Leon Don that was to evolve into the successful Bulls' Oztag competition.

"I believe Leon thought I'd be against it because of the conflict with touch football but I could see the benefit to the club to get Oztag going under the Bulls' banner and help the club on its way to being a true sports club not just a league club. It also was timed well to transition the junior touch teams to the junior Oztag competition."

Touch football is still played but more at a social level by senior players in 14 registered teams with Ian Boardman coordinating it after Steve Mark then John Noble had for many years contributed hugely to the running of touch footy. No one argues that Oztag has superseded it as the non-contact footy code of choice. And Hills have made a significant mark on the statewide and national scene.

The 2023 under-16 girls team became the most successful of any in Oztag's history in NSW when the close-knit group won their seventh

straight state title. Hills have provided many NSW reps and 31 Australian representatives since first being strong enough and big enough to take a full complement of teams to the junior state titles in 2014. And after coming second or third several times in the following nine years, the Bulls finally secured the 'Holy Grail' with the NSW state championships in February 2023.

And when the Tag World Cup was played in the northern hemisphere for the first time in August 2023, in the Irish town of Limerick, Hills Bulls had three representatives in Darcy and Dylan Brett and Liam Haskins. Less than a year earlier one of the Bulls' favourite sons, Luke Keary, represented Ireland in the Rugby League World Cup just over the Irish Sea in Britain.

Leon Don still puts in many hours as Oztag registrar while Graham Marshall is equally as dedicated running the representative side of the operation. Together, they can be immensely proud of what they have overseen.

"For us to win the state championships was a big thing; it's something I've personally always wanted to achieve club and have now ticked off that massive box," he said.

"We are a young club in the Oztag family, most of the others have been around for a lot longer; Norwest, Nepean and Penrith been around for 30 years while we've only

been playing reps for just over 10 years. It is a massive achievement for a young club.

"I represent Hills at the Oztag annual general meetings and once upon a time no one spoke about Hills Bulls. Now we get talked about all the time. It's very flattering when you go there and they ask you questions instead of the other way around.

"Having won the state championships and after years of putting in the work, I suppose I could walk away now a happy man. But I love the club that much and while there's no one else putting up their hand to take over some of these roles, you just keep doing it. My kids still play in senior comps and reps and, as much as

it's a lot of work, I get a lot of satisfaction out of watching kids and evolution of the club."

Graham's eldest daughter, Brooke, still plays as does her younger sister Georgia while Graham and Tracey's son Brayden has also played for years. Graham has coached all three and Tracey has been a much-valued active member of the Oztag and rugby league clubs.



IT IS NOT JUST TALENT

The Marshalls have also taken Hills Oztag to another level through facilitating custom-made tag-shorts for the teams to wear for the past six years. Manufactured on contract by OES (Oztag Equipment Sales), Brayden Marshall provides customized Bulls shorts and tights with the Bulls logo and the southern cross logo which is included in the rugby league teams' strips in



tribute to Nathan Gremmo. The initiative has proved very popular with players and has also become a handy revenue earner for the club.

Hills have produced many state junior champions over the past decade but the stand-out has certainly been the girls team that snared their seventh straight title as under-16s in 2023, coached by Ben Ellis whose daughter Waiaria is one of several outstanding team members.

No other junior team has won the state titles seven straight years but the Hills girls' run began as under-10s in 2017. Four girls have played in all seven titles – Waiaria Ellis, Nadella Harrison, Aaliyah Soufan and Georgia Bezzina. Many of the girls play in the West Sydney Tigers rep team in the Australian championship and they have won title five times there.

It is not just talent that has taken the girls so far but an incredible work ethic and desire to improve. Leading up to the 2023 state cup success they played trial games

against the Hills girls' under-15s, Cronulla's under-15 boys team, Cronulla under-20s ladies and Fairfield open women's B team.

"They're just an incredible side," said Graham. "Most of the girls been there for a long while. They put the hard yards in; go to the beach and do hill runs, play against teams much older, to make themselves better; outstanding athletes, the lot of them."

In the 2023 state titles at Coffs Harbour, Hills were champions in the under-10 boys, under-14 boys, under-15 girls, under-16 girls and under-17 boys. The seniors are developing too with under-20 boys making the semi-finals and under-20 mixed going all the way to the grand final. A total of 17 of the 18 teams who competed made the quarter-finals, 12 got to the semi-finals and seven made the grand finals. That is a phenomenal effort!

So too was the undefeated run to grand final victory by the under-17 boys who lost

seven players from their original squad and their coach because of representative rugby league commitments, and came from behind in two games before winning the grand final 4-2 against ACT.

Fifteen of the 64 players who went to the titles, and a coach, were chosen to represent Australia and five more made the NSW merit teams.

Their success would not be possible, however, without the coaches and trainers, many of whom also give up their time to rugby league teams in the winter, which emphasises the unity and family connections within Hills Sports Club. And devoting a good deal of time in the heart of the Oztag organisation are founder Leon Don, Graham and Tracey Marshall, referees coordinator Leon Carroll and Justin Moynihan.

Why has Oztag been so successful at rep level? Graham Marshall says a lot of it boils back to the selection and training of coaches, an open-minded attitude which

allows players and coaches from other rugby league clubs to be play in the rep teams, consistent and tight selection criteria and having good people at the top.

OCTOBER 2023 UPDATE

There was no doubt whatsoever that Baulkham Hills Oztag had developed into the most successful club/zone in the country judging by achievements in 2023.

On top of the breakthrough NSW junior club championship, 15 Bulls players (see list below) and coach Ben Ellis were selected to represent Australia – by far the greatest representative recognition Hills have witnessed. Then, in the national championships where Bulls players dominated the West Sydney Tigercub teams, the 'Cubs' recorded a dominance never seen before.

All 18 West City teams, from under-9s through to under-17s, made the semi-finals and 12 won their competitions, ???? by being undefeated.





Another was beaten in the grans final. This extraordinary consistency saw West Sydney win the tournament championships with a record 152 points, 68 clear of second-placed Central Coast. Below is the roll of honour which is a testament to how far local Oztag has progressed, particularly in the past year!

New South Wales Junior State Cup Club Champions

2023 Baulkham Hills

State Championship Winning Teams

- 2023 Under 10 Boys, U14 Boys, Under 15 Girls, Under 16 Girls, Under 17 Boys
- 2022 Under-20 Men, Under 14 Girls, Under 15 Girls, Under 16 Boys
- 2021 Under 10 Girls, Under 12 Boys, Under 14 Girls
- 2020 Under 9 Boys, Under 12 Boys, Under 13 Girls, Under 15 Boys
- 2019 Under 11 Boys, Under 11 Girls, Under 12 Girls

- 2018 Under 10 Boys, Under 11 Girls, Under 12 Boys, Under 13 Girls
- 2017 Under 9 Girls, Under 10 Girls, Under 12 Girls
- 2016 Under 11 Girls, Under 15 Boys
- 2015 Under 10 Girls
- 2014 Under 9 Girls, Under 9 Boys

Players selected to represent Australia

2023

- Under 21 Men Darcy Brettle, Dylan Brettle, Liam Haskins
- Under 20 Girls Kiera Field
- Under 16 Boys Hunter Bell, Jarred Haydon, Lincoln Fletcher, Noah Tamayo
- Under 16 Girls Waiaria Ellis, Nadelle Harrison, Ava Jones, Tia Matthews, Danielle Seckold, Naioka Tuipulotu, Olivia Va’Alele
- Under 18 Boys Dylan Brettle
- Under 18 Girls Keely Stevens
- Under 16 Boys (coach) Ben Ellis

2022

- Under 20 Girls Keely Stevens, Keira Field

2020

- Under 16 Boys Keahlan Bray, Alex Parsons

2018-2019

- Under 18 Boys Tyler Field

2017

- Under 16 Boys Zac Barry, Louis Reyes, Niwhai Puru, Reece Davison, Connor Mason, Drew Lloyd, Liam Haskins

2016

- Under 16 Girls Brooke Bonnell, Tyler Field

2015

- Under 16 Girls Tyler Field

Players selected to represent NSW

2022 (NSW Merit Teams)

Max Hayne (Under 11 Boys), Jackson Adams (Under 11 Boys), Bailey Hall (Under 13 Boys), Bailey Logue (Under 13 Boys), Levi Ellis (Under 13 Boys), Temieke Withers (Under 13 Girls), Hine Rikiti (Under 13 Girls), Tegan Nicholas (Under 13 Girls), Pati Jim (Under 14 Girls), Billie Gwynne (Under 14 Girls), Grace Button (Under 14 Girls), Dylan Prior (Under 15 Boys), Tyler Birnie (Under 15 Boys), Waiaria Ellis (Under 15 Girls), Tia Matthews (Under 15 Girls), Danielle Seckold (Under 15 Girls), Ava Jones (Under 15 Girls), Olivia Va’Alele (Under 15 Girls), Jack Attard (Under 16 Boys), Josiah Delana (Under 16 Boys), Luke Alderson (Under 16 Boys), Koby Rowe (Under 16 Boys)

2016

Chloe Michoux, Kayla Morris, Keely Stevens, Taylor Gates, Jacqueline Sneesby, Emily Thurbon, Emily Fox, Joshua Patrick, Koby Brown, Trae Allen, Dylan Brettle, Braithen Aspin, Jandamurra Stewart, Tallis Smith, Tyler

Field, Mikayla Allam, Keira Field, Georgia Marshall, Sebastian Sultana, Jack Clark, Liam Haskins, Isaac Papadatos, Ryan Matulewliz

2015

Keely Stevens, Taylor Gates, Teah Haskins, Mackenzie Davis, Holly McNally, Milla Ellaro, Emily Knez, Alexandra Parsons, Anneke Van Zoggel, Georgette Pellicano, Jordan Fenbow, Dylan Brettle, Declan Connolly, Luke Simpson, Nicholas Lenaz, Tyler Field, Mitchell Gardiner, Phil Banno, Jahi Pritchard, Brent Flavin, Emilia Kaafi

2014

Jesse Featherstone, Dylan Brettle, Josh Patrick, Declan Doyle, Will Finch, Thomas Grech, Koby Brown, Josaia Delana, Isaac Butterworth, Andre Ambichi, Lachlan Apps, Jayden Jenkins, Luke Simpson, Ben Ollis, Harrison Esh, Trae Allen

2013

Anders Glew, Callum Rennie, Tyler Field, Nick Zakiha, Zac Hall, Austin Scott



THE UNDISPUTED CHAMPIONS

CHAPTER 9 FOOTY IS FOR EVERYONE

GIRLS, WOMEN AND ALL-ABILITIES LEAGUE

Hills Bulls have produced numerous NRL players from its junior system and Australian representatives while the Oztag sector has provided 31 Australian players. Can the next

club also fielded League Tag sides in under-12 (div 1), under-12 (div 2), under-14 and under-16. That's a club record seven female teams.

The first coach and an instigator of girls' footy at Crestwood, Matt Rennie, would be delighted with how that side of the game has developed. In 2016 when he coached the first girls team, under-15s (demand from local girls saw two

It's fascinating to look back on that first delving into the girls' game through the 2016 yearbook's team report.

"We entered two Under 15s girls' teams this year who embraced their football and our club like no other. They have added a female touch whilst possessing a toughness that surpasses most blokes. Not to mention they

step in the ever-changing direction of league and its derivatives see Bulls girls progress to the quickly developing NRLW competition and make it to the Australian Jillaroos?

A major step came in 2023 when Hills fielded girls teams in the under-14 and under-16 competitions and a women's team while the

teams fielded and one became premiers), there was no NRL women's competition and the profile for the female game was quite low.

Nowadays, young girls have their idols playing on a fully televised NRLW competition, two State of Origin clashes a year, also telecast, and Australia being undisputed champions when it comes to the World Cup.

have also managed to stimulate the will and want for the 15 year-old boys to attend any and everything the club is involved in.

"As the competition was under way, their bonding session, luckily enough, took them on a Pink Party Bus into the Footy Show, which was a great night that they will never forget. The girls were also asked to do



some filming for PLAYNRL.COM which is used for coaching purposes which is very innovative in the women's rugby league!

"Our girls were minor premiers. They played their grand final at Wenty Ringrose Oval against Parra City Titans and the game was called off with two minutes to go at an 18-all draw due to a breach in code of conduct by the Titans.

"A very exciting season for the first ever Hills Bulls all girls team. It all started at the end of 2015 when Myah (Tahan) said she was going to play footy again as she heard a girls U15 competition was going to start in 2016. I said are you going to play for the Bulls and she said they haven't got a team.

"A phone call to the president and the Hills Bulls girls began. Myah and (mother) Steph did a lot of work trying to recruit girls and it wasn't long before there was a growing interest and several girls turning up for pre-season training in early February. We had an open invitation for any of the U15 boys or girls that wanted

to start some preseason training and every session we would have more girls than boys."

The amount of girls who wanted to play footy saw two under-15 teams fielded in that initial season and both should have played in the grand final. The 'Maroons' team beat the Titans (1) side in their semi-final but one of the Hills girls did not sign the registration sheet and Parramatta officials disqualified the team. The Titans instead went into the final against Hills Gold and the scores were locked at 18-all when the Titans put a concussed player back on the field after medical staff had ruled her out of the rest of the match.

The Titans were disqualified and the game awarded to Hills but, after some lively discussion, the girl was allowed to rejoin the match. However, both coaches agreed the girls' had had enough trauma during the break and they were declared joint premiers. Considering there was no leeway when the Maroons were put out of the competition for a minor infringement

yet the Titans' episode was allowed to be reviewed, the Bulls were not happy and asked for their two teams, on review, to be judged joint premiers but their claim fell on deaf ears.

Yet the success of Hills in the girls' game continued. In 2017 the same group, playing in the under-16s, were runners-up and, in 2018, a girls' League Tag team was formed while Hills also fielded four teams under standard rules and three winning premierships, and the under-15s title contested by two Hills teams in the grand final, with the Black side, coached by Vanessa Beck, the premiers.

In 2023, with the profile of the women's game at its greatest, the Hills look on the verge of further development and success.

Hannah Withers, wife of Michael, has been instrumental in the progress. The Withers daughters Temieke, 13, and Keira, 11, play for Hills (as does son Zac, 15).

Temieke is typical of many young girls who wanted to play rugby league. She played in

boys' teams until the age of 12 (girls cannot play with the boys past that age). In the under-8s she was the only girl, by the under-12s there were five. While also playing League Tag and Oztag before, Temieke wanted to play 'full rugby league' so parents rallied around to form an under-14s girls team.

"We asked her network of friends, advertised in schools and ended up getting 20 girls in 2022 to play in the Penrith competition," said Hannah. "In 2023, we now have under-14s, under-16s and there are two divisions in each age group, so the popularity is certainly increasing. And we were also able to field a women's team for the first time.

"People like Adam Nicholas, Simon Wynne (under-16 coach), Billy Gwynne, Teagan Nicholas, Zara and Temieke all worked hard; lots of parents asked everyone we could think of if they wanted to play. Sons asked if knew any girls who might want to play; we had a large group really keen on making it happen."

The stigma around girls playing what has traditionally been a boys' sport has greatly diminished, however some parents still needed much convincing to allow their daughters to confront full-on tackling. "Some were initially worried about getting injured but now they've played a couple of seasons they realise it's intense and physical but it's not crazy," said Hannah. "It's no different to letting a son play. I don't worry any more about my daughter than my son."

Brian Parnell, under-13 girls League Tag coach, has also witnessed a wider acceptance of girls playing rugby league or the tag version of the game. His daughter Leah has played both.

"When Leah first started playing rugby league, parents would say, 'Is she playing RL?' as if they were thinking, 'What sort of parent are you?'. That attitude is gone now. Leah loves it and has never been injured.

"And it's not just about bigger more physical girls either. There are definitely a lot of smaller



girls doing really well. We have some very well-mannered girls but when they cross the line onto the field and they rip into it with hard running and big defence; total commitment. They are the most beautiful girls off the field when they finish. One girl gets hammered in defence every week but she's straight back into it the next week."

Brian and Hannah agree that the profile of the NRLW and women's State of Origin has been a major boost for the development of the girls' game. Many Hills' female juniors aspire to reach that level and according to Brian, there are several who have certainly shown the talent.

"The girls have some definite role models now and some of the Eels' NRLW players have been down for training sessions," he said. "There is something for our girls to aspire to now and we have four or five here who are definitely capable of playing NRLW. Some of the girls are phenomenal; they have Oztags backgrounds so throw the ball around and play a quick game."

In 2023, the Bulls entered new territory by fielding a women's team in the Metro Combined Open Age competition. Coached by Tony Cosatto, the side was up against two teams from the Penrith Panthers pathway system, Toongabbie All Saints, Narraweena Colts, St Christopher's Penrith, Leichhardt Wanderers and Glenmore Park.

The idea came through a group of local policewomen who competed in a tournament in Tamworth in 2022 and had a desire to keep playing regularly, particularly Dana Griffin who was a driving force. Tony, who had previously coached C-grade, under-20s and junior teams, was given the job of putting a team together and has more than 20 in the squad (most who had never played rugby league before). Shift work by the police members makes it difficult to get regularity in training and playing numbers but the former Parramatta and Wests Tigers first grader has thrived with the challenge.



"The girls' attitude is fantastic and there is some good unity; most of them had never played league before so there is a lot of learning of the basics. It's a challenge to get a lot at training because of their shift work, and it's the same in the games too, but they are so committed.

"Hopefully we'll have some girls who will come through from the under-age teams with a few years of good coaching and

go to NRLW matches with a growing number of others involved with the girls teams now joining them. "Those players are so accessible now and promote the game so well," Hannah said. "They do a lot to make that connection between their clubs and the pathways.

"I think it is important our girls can see the pathways with women now on TV; it doesn't seem impossible to emulate them.

ATTITUDE IS FANTASTIC

"We only had 12 players for our first game but we went down 18-6 to Toongabbie and when the girls scored their first try in the last minute, it was like they'd won the game, it was such a good feeling to see them so excited," he said. "I've absolutely loved it. I'm passionate about; it has been exhilarating.

playing behind them, so that will hopefully augur very well for the Hills Bulls."

The girls'/women's game has certainly created quite a foothold in the Hills Bulls' environment with many taking quite an interest in female footy at a higher level too. The Withers family have missed just one women's State of Origin game (in Townsville in 2023) and regularly

"Mieka talks about playing NRLW one day, that would be her ideal choice. She knows her dad played at the highest level, so it is a reality for her too. And she knows that David Boyle, who played with Michael at Bradford and remains a good friend, has a daughter (Millie) who has played NRLW and for the Jillaroos (while her brother Morgan is an NRL



player), so that gives her encouragement too.”

Could the Withers family provide Hills Bulls’ first dual link to big time rugby league – the men’s and women’s professional game?

The ground-breaking move for Hills Bulls to launch an All Abilities team in 2023 has attracted such heartening support that it has surprised many.

The club had shown interest in entering a ‘Try Time’ team (the official ‘franchise’ name for the form of rugby league for people with recognised disabilities) for two years with president Michael Gremmo and board member/secretary Rick Palin particularly supportive. But it wasn’t until Andrew Odell and his wife Kirralee volunteered to manage a potential team that it became a reality.

And its popularity, and interest from within and outside the club, has been extraordinary. The first team in 2023 was launched without time to be affiliated with Try Time but that seems just a matter of time with its registration set to be accepted in 2024.

There were 14 registered players in 2023 - from five-year-old Barrie Meredith to 23-year-olds Trent Townsend, the team captain, and Junel Bagus. A heart-warming facet of the team’s establishment involves Barrie and his mother, Maryna Meredith, catching the train from Chatswood to training where she is picked up by a club member. The club bought

a child seat for Barrie to accommodate the train travel.

The Odells have a 12-year-old son, Ethan, who has special needs. He had played with junior boys teams and he has enthusiastically embraced the All Abilities matches. The team trains once a week and plays whenever opposition is available, usually once or twice a month.



the admin behind it, manages the team and I took on coaching. We really enjoy it and without her we couldn’t do it.”

Andrew coached division three teams that Ethan played in but as the boys were older and bigger, Ethan no longer enjoyed the contact. “He loved touch football and training and being with his mates, so that’s why I went to the club about

Mounties, Minchinbury Jets and Quakers Hill. There are nine to 10 players on the field and only two-handed touch tackles are permitted and the minimum two-passes rule of the modified form of the game is used. “At first thought it was tough getting the players organised enough but everyone loves it now,” Andrew said. “To see the smile on

ALL ABILITIES RUGBY LEAGUE

“I said to club last year (2022) that when you have got something for those with disabilities, I’ll get involved otherwise we’ll be forced to go to Wenty who have had a Try Time team for years,” Andrew Odell said. “Mick and Rick had been looking at doing something and been looking for someone to take it on.

“Kirralee (Andrew’s wife) does a lot of

forming an all abilities team,” Andrew added. “I asked around on social media, at Ethan’s special needs school (St Gabriel’s, Castle Hill), and three or four players came from there. We asked some Wenty players, and people involved in the club and some come down and help out.”

In 2023, games were played against Wentworthville, Leichhardt Wanderers,

their faces when they score a try and to do things they don’t normally do with others at school is great, so rewarding. We have a few kids with autism, others with intellectual disabilities and one with cerebral palsy.

“I’ve roped in friends to come down and help and they have had so much fun; they love it now. Simon Gwynne brings his whole family



down – his wife Ali, son Koby, daughter Billy and daughter Sienna is a trainer. My daughter Matilda is also a trainer. Beck Northam, who helps out, doesn't have any children in the team but loves being involved."

Skipper Trent Townsend is 23, has an intellectual disability and had been playing Try Time for 10 seasons when he moved from Wenty to join the inaugural Hills' side.

"I needed a change of scenery and Hills are closer to my house," he said. "There's a great vibe at the club, we have about 12 players and I love every single one of them. They're like brothers and sisters.

"I cherished the times I had with Wentworthville United but wanted a new challenge and I like to try to mentor players who hadn't played before."

Trent scored his first try for four years during one of his first appearances for Hills, joking that he is the "Alex Twal of the team" (The Wests Tigers prop celebrated his first try in over 70 games in 2023 to much fanfare).

"My goal is to spread the ball, try not to hog it, although the trainers often say, 'Just run the ball Trent, run it!'. But I want to be unselfish and spread it to the wing."

Rick Palin is passionate about the team's fortunes. His wife, Candice, had worked in special needs schools space for 10 years and convinced him of the enormous value of giving people with disabilities the opportunity to embrace playing rugby league.

"I thought it was something we didn't have but needed," Rick said. "Try Time has been around for years but I'm a great believer that if you put something together it has to be sustainable and you must keep it going, so that's why we hadn't endeavoured into it earlier. You let the kids down if you can't provide something year after year.

"It has been a very rewarding initiative by the club. The all-inclusiveness is what builds community.."

Director Craig Culnane, who heads coaching and development and has coached at NRL first grade and under-20s level, says the best aspect of the Bulls 2023 season was watching the all-abilities team. "I've done a few sessions with them and just to see the smiles on their face and the enjoyment is wonderful," he said. "I bought a few of my under-16s team to help out at training and they loved it.

"These sort of things are really important, so many people have bought into it. They train like everyone else does; they rip in. It's not just tokenistic, it's a genuine footy team."



FOOTY IS FOR EVERYONE



CHAPTER 10 SUCCESSIVE SENIOR PREMIERSHIPS

SYDNEY SHIELD VICTORY CAPS OFF ANOTHER BRILLIANT BULLS SEASON

Bulls skipper, Sean Walpole, knew as much as anyone the relevance of him holding aloft the Sydney Shield at Kogarah Jubilee Oval

served so devotedly for decades. He would have liked great mate, co-captain and fellow loyal Bull Jayden Griffen, to have been on the field with him but this was still a decisive moment.

Firstly, it was the Bulls' first Sydney Shield grand final victory after some heartbreaking close calls over the years. It was one of the biggest upsets in the competition's history against a St

so often dominated by league-club backed clubs who can pay their players much more than the Bulls can, and predominantly local juniors or loyal long-time Hills men. It encapsulated the club's essence.

They'd done it the hard way during the four weeks of the finals, coming back from poor starts or warding off late flurries that

GIANT KILLERS DO IT AGAIN

in early September 2023, just a year after his most satisfying day as a long-time Hills servant – witnessing the Ron Massey Cup side's breakthrough conquest a year earlier.

The tough, consistent second-rower/prop, who'd shuffled between the Shield and Cup sides throughout the season, was playing his 300+ game for his beloved club which his family had

Marys side that had lost just two games in the previous three seasons and were runaway minor premiers. And thirdly, since he started playing at Crestwood at the age of seven, he'd aspired to experience this moment. At 27 and with much left to achieve, it had become a reality.

The giant-killers had done it again, beat the best in the semi-professional competitions

threatened to end their season, but the great spirit developed by this bunch of young men was their greatest weapon.

"I hit me during the week leading up to the game, that I was leading the club into such a big match; it was such a privilege and honour to do that," Sean said "And to bring it home for so many people ... that was 20 years in the

READY FOR WHAT'S NEXT



making for me. I hope to have more moments like that but if there aren't any, that's footy and I have this moment to savour – it's a hell of a moment, especially with the players I played with, the staff we had and the Hills people who were there; friends for life.

“You hope you get a premiership in the seniors after all the years I've been playing and to finally get that honour was great but to do it with the group we had made it even more special,” Sean said. “I grew up watching A grade and the senior teams since I was seven, wanting to be out there one day. It was a honour and privilege to captain team, especially after my older brother, Rhys, had before me and my family have had such a long involvement.

“Once the siren sounded, it was an incredible feeling, especially having a lot of Hills juniors in that side. Tom Watson was my ballboy back in under-13s, Isaac Gorman has been such a part of the club for so long; I'd played eight years with Dave Baumann; Jayden Griffen

been there 19 years but unfortunately missed the game through injury. There were a few other blokes who had been at the club at a long time. And then you see Griffio (Paul Griffin) and (Michael) Gremmo there and others and how much it meant to them... it took a week for me to really absorb it all.

“The other thing to stick out to me too was that, playing against the rich clubs with leagues club backing, we've won a Massey Cup and Sydney Shield in successive seasons. I think we've proved we can compete with all of them through the great loyalty players show in staying with the Bulls when they could probably get more money elsewhere and those who have come back to the club to repay the club for what it had given them.

“We were so close as a group; we'd go out together and always go back to the pub after matches. And on the field, you just knew we had each other's back and would give every bit of effort. Our coach Matt Kelly

was a huge part of what we achieved too; he wouldn't give himself much credit but he's a real motivator who people want to play for. Everyone in that team owes him the grand final; and all his staff. It was a great effort in his first season in semi-professional footy. He never over-complicated things and developed this great camaraderie around him.”

St Mary's dominance of the competition over the past two seasons was obvious. Leading into the grand final, they had lost only two games from 34 played in 2022-23 (with an average winning margin of 23 points per game) and their Ron Massey Cup side had done through 2023 unbeaten and went on to win their grand final against Wentworthville, 40-12.

Meanwhile, the Bulls had to show a good deal of resilience just to make it to the 'big dance'. After losing in finals week one to Penrith Brothers by 34-16, they secured a rematch in the preliminary final with a nervous 26-22 victory over Ryde Eastwood, going from a 12-0



READY FOR WHAT'S NEXT



lead after 11 minutes to a 20-6 second half lead before having to snuff out a 60-metre last-ditch charge by the Hawks, who had scored two tries in the final six minutes. That took them to the Brothers’ re-match in the preliminary final. Down 18-0 after just 13 minutes, Hills somehow fought on to lead for the first time after 77 minutes with a try to five-eighth Dylan Marshall and held on for a 22-18 victory.

And the decider at Kogarah Jubilee Oval could not have begun worse for Hills. After giving away possession by fumbling the kick-off, St Marys took advantage and scored in their first set of possession for a 6-0 lead after just two minutes of play.

The character of the response from the Bulls typified their enormous spirit they displayed right through the season. Determined second-rower Damon Smith took two defenders over the line from close range on the left edge in the 14th minute to start an uncontested 22-point scoring run by the Bulls. They

took the lead when classy hooker Kruz Niutili-Schmidt darted over from dummy half 11 minutes later and, despite some anxious moments, never relinquished it.

Marshall scored the first of his two tries in the 31st minute with a classic dummy saw him break through from 10 metres and when halfback Ceiza James scored on the left after two brilliant left-foot steps, Hills had gone to a 22-6 lead. However, an extraordinary effort from 80 metres that gave St Marys centre Michael Tuavoa, the first of his three tries ,in the last minute of the half gave Saints new heart. After regaining possession from a smart short kick-off to resume the second half, the Bulls kicked out to 28-10 through interchange dummy-half Tom Watson but St Marys responded with two converted tries in six minutes to make it a six-point game with 28 minutes remaining.

Watson’s second try from dummy-half made it 34-22 but Saints responded with two unconverted tries in the 67th and 75th minutes

to make it 34-30 and the Bulls safely navigated the anxious last five minutes. In circumstances reminiscent of the final seconds of the Ron Massey Cup grand final victory at the same venue a year earlier, when Damon Smith snatched up a desperate last-throw chip-kick by Saints’ Tuavoa with 40 seconds remaining, the mighty Hills knew they’d secured a second piece of senior football history 12 months apart.

Kruz was outstanding during the final series. But so too were the rest if the ‘spine’ in fullback Brad Avery, inspirational in the last three sudden death matches, and halves Marshall and James. And football people know that, to shine in those positions, the forwards must be doing their job and the up-front boys did not take a backward step in the last three weeks of the season. “The key in the grand final was definitely the bench,” said Sean Walpole, “We definitely had the edge over St Marys there.”

The grand final victory was bitter-sweet for co-captain Jayden Griffin whose season ended

when he suffered his second ACL injury in the second last competition round’s 36-34 loss to Ryde Eastwood at TG Milner Field. The son of season football’s patriarch Paul Griffin first wore a Bulls jersey before he turned four and had had 19 seasons with the club over 22 years (the remainder in representative football for Norths and Souths or their feeder clubs).

He was an inspirational leader for the side in 2023, playing 10 of the 16 competition round games (and three in Ron Massey). “It was a tough period of course but it would have been a hell of a lot tougher if the boys didn’t go on and win the comp,” he said. “They did it the hard way, that’s for sure, but the closeness of the group and desire to work hard shone through.

“It was so special seeing what it meant to so many people around the club. The results of the past two years, winning Ron Massey and then Sydney Shield, are a way of saying thank you to all the people who got Hills into senior footy and worked so hard to get us to where

we are now. There are so many players now who love playing for the Bulls, even a lot of the Norths players have wanted to come back to play for Hills because they love what we are about. That’s something I’m really proud of.”

Coach Matt Kelly was elevated to the Shield role after taking the A-grade to the minor premiership in 2022. He said after the grand final victory, “They were all-in for each other for every minute.” He depicted in his annual report a team that “showed solidarity, commitment and courage”. “The team did not have any standout stars but had the intestinal fortitude to be there for each other. I congratulate them on their work ethic and not losing sight of the ultimate goal.”

The coach paid particular tribute to fullback Avery, who will join Melbourne Storm’s under-21 system for the 2024 season, for the 19-year-old development from a rugby union winger in Perth to a fullback at senior level in just 12 months. “He had 24 carries on grand final day and just got better as the season progressed.



“It was a fresh side compared to 2022’s and I had four No. 1s and four No. 9s I had to make fit. Damon Smith and Mitch Gardiner played in the back row with Kruz Niutili-Schmidt starting and Tom Watson off the bench and Joseph Jaber, also 19, had to play on the wing and our halves Dylan Marshall and Ceiza James also came to the Bulls as fullbacks. They all blossomed during the year and were rewarded with a premiership. “We had a team that just bonded together. We had guys from all walks of life coming together for three to four months, including seven who had never played at that level before and they bought into everything; just happy to be around each other and just go as hard and as far as they possibly could. And they had some great leaders too – it was the right mix. I’ve never seen a group bond as well before.”

The historic first Sydney Shield’s grand final winning side was Brad Avery, Joseph Jaber, Ben Riley, Tui Afualo, Cameron Hall, Dylan Marshall, Ceiza James, Joshua Maree, Kruz

Niutili-Schmidt, Sean Walpole (captain), Mitchell Gardiner, Damon Smith, Matthew Newlyn. Interchange: Tom Watson, Te Oranga-Jade Haika, Isaac Gordon, David Baumann. Coach: Matt Kelly. Result: Hills Bulls 34 (Thomas Watson 2, Damon Smith, Kruz Niutili-Schmidt, Dylan Marshall, Ceiza James tries; Bradley Avery 5 goals) def. St Marys 30 (Michael Tuavoa 3, Sadee Sub Laban, Jedd Gordon, Sanieel Sykes tries; Riley Stokes 3 goals)

The Ron Massey Cup premiership-defending side made the finals for the fifth successive season, finishing fifth, but bowed out with a 26-18 loss to Ryde Eastwood in the elimination final, after being behind 16-0 at half-time after having no luck in the first 40 minutes. Only a fortnight earlier the Bulls completed perhaps their most convincing performance of the season in knocking over the Hawks 44-8 away, benefitting from an almost error-free effort. But Hills were without the two most experienced players in mid-season signing

James Roberts, the former NSW State of Origin centre, and ex-NRL prop Martin Kennedy.

The Bulls used 43 players during the year and were more heavy with North Sydney Bears than in 2022 but this led to regular team changes and a lack of consistency.

“When I look at the season we were well-led by co-captains Taniela Lasalo and Brad Keighran and Brad was the competition’s top points-scorer and Logan Aldridge was Cup’s top try-scorer, so they were excellent achievements,” said coach David Heath. “But as a team we underachieved. Basically our defence wasn’t good enough and we were too inconsistent during the season. We struggled for stability.

“The victory over Ryde-Eastwood in the second last round was the highlight of the season and showed what we were capable and cemented our spot in the semi-final. Our performances had started to build in the back-end of the season but an extremely poor

first half in the semi-final sunk us in the end, despite a really good effort in the second half.”

At other levels of the Hills Sports’ 2023 performances, the junior rugby league club had another wonderful season and would have repeated the effort of 2022 by winning the Parramatta club championships had the usual criteria that had been in place since 1942 been retained. Instead, a scaled system of points allocation which favoured smaller clubs (points weighted according to the division played) saw the dominant Wentworthville gain the honour.

Hills fielded 43 teams (39 rugby league teams plus four League Tag including the new All Abilities team and a women’s A-grade side for the first time), comprising a total of 668 players. Impressively, 21 of 29 eligible teams made it to the finals. The most impressive performers were:

Under-15 (1)	Minor Premiers and Premiers
Under-14 (1) Girls	Undefeated Minor Premiers and Premiers
Under-9 (2)	Premiers

All Abilities	Premiers
Under-16 Girls League Tag	Grand Finalists
Under-12 (1)	Grand Finalists
Under-11 (1)	Grand Finalists

The stand-out teams were the under-14 girls, who were joint club team of the year with the Sydney Shield premiers, and the under-15 boys who were also unbeaten champions. Michael Withers’ girls team had a points differentiation of 370 over 14 games (580-110) in the Sydney wide competition and were dominant in the finals, beating Bondi 32-0 in the major semi-final and Wentworthville 24-8 in the grand final.

Under-15 boys, coached by long-time Bulls servant and senior player Isaac Gorman, won the grand final against Guildford in a breathtaking finish. Despite losing five players with long-term injuries during the season, the Bulls made it to the finals as minor premiers, beat Wentworthville in the major semi-final before coming up against the in-form Owls.



A brilliant late long-range team try to Cobi McClosky levelled the scores at 16-all, leaving difficult sideline conversion attempt for Talen Risati at Belmore Sports Ground. He landed the pressure kick to give Hills an amazing victory.

Season 2023 saw 22 Bulls junior represent the club in the Ron Massey Cup and Sydney Shield teams, validating the goals of club officials in providing a worthwhile pathway for local boys to progress through to the semi-professional ranks and hopefully beyond.

Hills' place in Sydney's west was evident at the Parramatta league's presentation day when Ian Boardman was announced as club person of the year, Craig Culnane (under-16 boys and Bulls coaching director) as coach of the year and Aimee Gonzalas, who puts so many hours into canteen duties at Crestwood, was chosen as volunteer of the year.

And alongside the continued success of rugby league and its derivatives, the Oztag division

is at its zenith with 15 players and a coach selected to represent Australian in 2023 (see Oztag chapter) after the club became the NSW junior club champions for the first time.

For president Michael Gremmo, 2023 was in many ways just as successful as the unprecedented 2022, if he weights up developments and achievements club-wide.

"To replicate 2022, one of biggest years in the Bulls' history for all of our sports, was always going to be hard to achieve. However, winning the Sydney Shield against the mighty St Marys who'd been so dominant for three seasons, winning junior Bulls premierships including girls teams, the further development of our coaching plus the incredible performances in OzTag in having 17 Australian representatives and becoming NSW junior state champions for the first time, all combined to make it an exceptional year for Hills Bulls Sports.

"We should have had another rugby league



club championship but the Parramatta league, in their wisdom, changed the criteria of over 80 years to an averaging system which penalised us. It's not a system I agree with; they should bring in a second award for averaging success.

"Yet when we look at what we achieved in 2023, the fact we are financially in one of the best positions ever been in over our 60-year history; we've just begun building the gym

at Crestwood and hope to recommence the community centre in 2024, we've strengthened our relationship with the Bears as part of a system now linked to Melbourne Storm and have plans to strengthen our senior squad next year ... we're still progressing.

"That is all made possible by the dedicated amount of volunteers and those who support clubs, behind an excellent board.

We have an enormous amount to be proud of as we celebrate our 60th birthday. "It's the volunteers and members who make me a very proud old Bull. They have been the heart and soul of this club for six decades and hopefully that will never change."



ONCE A BULL, ALWAYS A BULL

CHAPTER 11 **READY FOR WHAT'S NEXT**

CLUBHOUSE WOULD CAP OFF BULLS' DEVELOPMENT

As Hills Bulls Sports went through the club's 60th season, its standing as a giant, respected entity in the Hills Shire was unquestioned. The Bulls were the reigning Parramatta

field to play on in 1964, is one of the most successful sports clubs in the country, and certainly among the most professionally-run 'amateur' sports organisations.

Its heritage has been carried from the under-8 boys and girls being introduced to the game for the first time through to the National Rugby League competition

and Irish international Keary has won three premierships with South Sydney and Sydney Roosters and was the Churchill Medal winner in 2018, a feat repeated by Ryan Papenhuyzen (Melbourne Storm) in 2020. Both have maintained their links with Hills, Papenhuyzen having donated several man of the match awards to Nathan Gremmo Community Fund

junior league club champions, the Ron Massey Cup premiers and, in February 2023, Hills had broken through to be crowned the NSW junior Ozttag champions.

There was no doubt the club, first known as Hills District, that was spawned by dissatisfied Baulkham Hills rugby union players who had to scoop up cow-dung just to have a

where five former Bulls had become NRL regulars – Luke Keary (Sydney Roosters), Ryan Papenhuyzen and Tom Eisenhuth (Melbourne Storm), Tom Starling (Canberra Raiders) and Josh Curran (NZ Warriors).

Two of these are Clive Churchill Medal winners, among the elite who have been voted as the NRL's Grand Final's best players. Australian

and Jersey Day while Keary readily gives time to the Bulls' academy and mini clinic coaching and mentoring young Bulls.

Once a Bull, always a Bull.

In 2023, the expansion of what has been known as Hills Bulls Sports since 2017, and its increased diversity, was there for all to see. Ozttag participation was at its ceiling



of 4000 players, with three representing Australia at the first World Cup held outside of Australia, in Ireland. The Bulls had 39 rugby league teams including two junior girls sides, a senior women's team and four League Tag teams. And the fielding of the club's first all-abilities team was a heart-warming initiative.

The club is in the best financial position in its 60 years' of existence despite funding two semi-professional teams, having money earmarked for further development of Crestwood Reserve and providing the best conditions and facilities of any junior club in the region.

Yet, while hard work, pride in performance and passion for the jersey have combined to see Hills Bulls take on such lofty status, there are some goals in sight that would satisfy those who have rolled up their sleeves and put endless hours of toil into making the Bulls the success the club has become. And near the top of the 'wish list' is the completion of the grand plan of having a clubhouse sitting proudly above the multi-purpose block and dressing rooms at The Bull Pit.

By March 2024, a new gymnasium will be built on the hill overlooking the amenities block thanks to a \$100,000 NSW Government grant. By the time that much-needed facility is complete, the Bulls board would like to be in a position to know that the construction of the clubhouse will definitely be a dream come true.

Previous works have left the single story current

building ready for a second storey addition and plans have been drawn up. The total cost would be around \$750,000 and the club is hoping its application for \$300,000 being submitted to the state government will be realised. As has been the case with much of the development of Crestwood, support from sponsors, club members and their contacts and direct labour



moved there in 1984. Over more than four

of the time, Glenn Starr, was the driving force behind a new multi-function area with kitchen and bar in 2013. An electronic scoreboard was added in 2016 before the concrete terracing down one side of the main field was completed in 2010, through the generosity of Glenn Starr who provided the works (valued far more) through a 10-year \$100,000 sponsorship by his

A PLACE TO MIX AFTER MATCHES

provided by Hills people, the actual cost would be lower than the value of works.

A place to mix after matches and training, and a rightful home to display the Bulls memorabilia, would complete the Bull Pit as an appropriate site to reminisce more than 60 years of history.

Crestwood has been the home of the Bulls' juniors since 1977 and the senior teams

decades since, the club has more than paid its own way in making the venue a worthy place to train, host children's matches as well as Ron Massey Cup and Ozttag under good lighting. Well over \$1 million would have been donated in the cost of works and value-in-kind by Hills Bulls at Crestwood.

The changes have been many. Club president

business, G and J Starr Plumbing. Field one was renamed Hilditch Field and field two became Kolc Field in 1978, in honour of the Bulls' first Australian international players. Field three was assigned as a training field (it was initially used by soccer) and Hills Bulls share it with cricket.

Crestwood now supplies four international-sized fields and a mini-field for training and



two full-size fields we play on at weekends. The club contributes largely to the weekly maintenance in-season and has invested in zero-turn mowers to put the fields in the best possible shape and assist the council with grass feeding and ground levelling.

The original canteen and clubhouse was built by members, the lighting was upgraded over the years and built by members when, too often, the local council would not provide funds while, to the Bulls’ annoyance, put more focus on providing funding and facilities for other clubs who did not, or could not, contribute what the Bulls have.

“Everything here, while a council asset, has been done by the club which is virtually the caretaker of the grounds,” said secretary Rick Palin. “We’ve spent \$350,000 to get the multi-function block to where it is now, and it would have been double if we went to external builder. All the hard work is done and we’re now hoping to get the

government funding to complete the job.”

Those running Hills Sports Club, and the army of volunteers and families who believe in the club’s past, present and its healthy future, have invested in what is genuinely a community treasure.

A look around the home dressing room at Crestwood gives an insight not only to the history with a montage of photos covering 60 years on one wall, but an eye into the psyche of a Bulls player too.

On another wall is a collection of sayings and photos. The usual motivational creeds are there, like, “Mental toughness is essential to success” and “Individual commitment to a group makes a team work” plus “Train strong, be strong, your game is a product of your preparation”. But, more specific to the turf the players are about to run onto and what they represent, are these ... “You’re a credit to the greatest game of all,” Ray Warren; “A good bunch of fellows ... they hold a special place

in my heart,” Keith Hoyle; “Develop mates for life,” Phil Evenden; and “The club gives me a work ethic and understanding,” Andrew Reid.

Above the historical images is the banner which proclaims:

CLUB HISTORY, 1963-2017
“Integrity, values, community involvement...”
Hills Bulls have all three.” – Barry Rudd

There are names synonymous with the first few decades like the Shanahans, Gremmos, Woellners, L'Estranges and Hoyles plus Bob Collings, Barry Rudd, Allan Cook, Phil O'Brien and others. There is a new generation just as dedicated and hard-working like the Marshalls, Byrnes, Wynnes, Mark Mahoney, Matt Reardon, Rick Palin, Rob Zecchin, Paul Griffin and others

Hopefully, for the next 60 years, more generations of Bulls devotees will continue to pour water into the well that was dug late in 1963. And for a family club so steeped in community commitment, there is little doubt that among the servants of the future, there will be new generations bearing the same surnames that Hills Bulls Sports will always be indebted to.

CLUB, TEAM, PLAYER



who are still regular fixtures on any given weekend down at the Bull Pit. And the Gremmo family, through Michael snr to Michael jnr and his brothers and the generation below, who have been the constants across all those years.

Because the mantra of Hills Bulls remains firmly entrenched in its ethos.

Once a Bull, always a Bull.
CLUB... TEAM... PLAYER.

READY FOR WHAT'S NEXT





BULLS FAMILIES



ROBERT ZECCHIN

THE BULLS' MEDICAL MARVEL

Those who might have casually watched Robert Zecchin run onto the field in his orange or blue shirt as one of the team's sports trainer may not have realised the depth of his medical credentials or the breadth of his service to his beloved Hills Bulls.

Awarded life membership in YEAR, 'Rob' has spent more than 20 years giving devoted service to one of his three great passions in life – the Bulls, his family and cardiac rehabilitation and awareness.

Away from the footy, he has been a nurse for more than 40 years and for most of that time has headed a highly-celebrated cardiac rehabilitation program based at Westmead Hospital that has the support of cardiac

arrest survivor, Greg Page, the original Yellow Wiggle and long-time Hills shire resident.

Rob, until 2023 when he decided to take step back to spend more time with his wife Alison and have more flexibility in visiting their South Coast holiday house, was the Bulls' medical officer for many years which meant he was, with secretary Rick Palin, the busiest man in the club during the challenging Covid-affected years of 2020-21.

They had to ensure all protocols were adhered to like maintaining individual water bottles on sidelines, sign in and sign out requirements, vaccinations, hand washing and cleaning balls at training and matches.

He was the club registrar for 20 years and a member of the committee/board until 2019, initially taking on the treasurer's role

ROBERT ZECCHIN

in 2003 when the club was under severe financial pressures. Only two years earlier he first became involved in the Bulls’ activities other than as a parent on the sideline, when his youngest son Ryan joined his older brother Christopher at Hills.

Ryan began playing in the under-7s in 2001 alongside future NRL players Ryan Papenhuyzen and Tom Starling.

The team was good enough to end the undefeated seven-year run of Mounties Ryan’s in the under-12s. Ryan Zecchin played until he won a competition in C-grade (division 1) in 2017. He still plays Oztag at Hills after a couple of seasons playing rugby union.

Christopher continued until under-16s (Robert was his coach in division 3) before he decided to concentrate on his academic studies which saw him become a doctor.

Christopher’s career choice was no surprise. Rob is well-respected and credentialled in

the nursing profession and runs a cardiac rehabilitation unit based at Westmead Hospital that also serves Mount Druitt, Blacktown and Auburn hospital. He began at the Cardiac Education and Assessment Program (CEAP) at Westmead Hospital as its nurse unit manager in 1991 and later took up the role of nurse unit manager for the cardiac rehabilitation services across all four sites in 2004.

He has been called on to give lectures to noted industry colleagues, in Australia and as far away as Spain, including giving the prestigious Invited Cardiovascular Nurse Lecture at the Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand.

He has also received the Alan Goble Distinguished Service Award in 2021 for recognition of extraordinary service to cardiovascular health and rehabilitation in Australia by the Australian Cardiovascular Health and Rehabilitation Association. Not many can use on-the-job emergency nursing to find their life’s partner, but Robert Zecchin is

not your everyday nurse. Alison, his girlfriend at the time (1985) was a third year student nurse doing part of her clinical training when one of her young patients had a cardiac arrest and Robert rushed to the rescue. “I came in with the cardiac defibrillator and cardioverted the patient into normal rhythm. You can say that it was love at first shock!” Alison knew her knight in shining armour was one the keep.

The progress of Hills Bulls in the past two decades is a passion he’s just as proud of.

“We were nearly broke when I first went on the board so to see the evolution of Hills to become the most successful and biggest club in the Parramatta junior competition is very rewarding and impressive, considering we don’t have a licensed club behind us” Robert said. “People want to come here because they know they will be coached well and the club is run well.

“And the preparations have been done for an extension at Crestwood to take in a clubhouse,



1963 – 2023



which would be fantastic. Watching everyone put their time and effort into that has been an example of the spirit in the club; people rolling up their sleeves for each other.

I remember I’d get home from work and spend four hours cleaning bricks for the new clubhouse with aching arms but no hesitation.

“It’s all about the volunteers here, we are very much volunteer-based. We have great leadership, and everyone wants to pitch in.

“Volunteers do it for the love of the club, that’s the essence of the club’s success. And a lot of us stay involve after our kids stop playing here. It’s about the kids, but not just your kids.

“It’s a club that has respect from within and without and continually makes hard decisions like no parents being allowed to coach their sons in division one past the age of 13, and backing the girls’ and women’s game. Some clubs are imitating us now with the coaching call.”



THE YOUNG FAMILY

A LOOK THROUGH THE LIST OF PLAYERS WITH THE MOST APPEARANCES FOR THE HILLS WILL FEATURE THREE YOUNG BROTHERS,

part of a dedicated family that has been synonymous with the credence that Hills Bulls are inherently a family club.

The oldest, Robert, retired in 2014 after making his 300th appearance in the predominantly black jersey, after first wearing it in 1992. Middle brother Greg played 166 games before he hung up the boots in 2008 after captaining nine teams along the way, including A-grade. The youngest Young, Tom,

amassed 277 appearances before ending his career in Ron Massey Cup in 2019.

They were all born to be Bulls and spent most of their childhood at Crestwood Reserve. Their father, the late John Young, was treasurer for eight years and a dedicated club worker for a lot longer, while their mother Alyson was instrumental in establishing a second generation of touch football at Kellyville, putting hours of hard work into its administration, on top of her many years as a “canteen lady” at Crestwood.

“The strongest memories of my childhood are around spending so much time at Crestwood,” said Tom, whose plumbing business is a club sponsor. “From being in nappies, watching my brothers train and play, to going on to play myself; it was the best way to grow up, playing with other kids all weekend at Crestwood.

“And there was always so much support for my

family; it was awesome when my father passed away. And that’s why it is so easy to give back now; because there are so many who do the same. I first saw it when I was coached in the under-12s by Paul Griffin – and he’s still putting in. It was instilled in us boys by our parents too.”

Robert moved to Miami, Florida, last year through his employment with Good Living Global, an outdoor furniture manufacturing company that is breaking into the American market, after living in Brisbane for many years. Before those career changes he spent much of his life with the Bulls, winning seven premierships and regularly captaining A-grade as a tough prop. He won Michael Green (mini) best player award in 1993, the Marj Radford award in 2001 and was the senior clubman of the year in 2005 and 2011.

Greg, who has lived in Brisbane for the past few years, working in the finance/insurance industry, had 13 seasons at Crestwood and was his team’s player of the year five

times. He played mostly as a hooker.

Tom began his playing career in 1998 and spent more than two decades as a Bull, although he had two seasons as a member of the Parramatta Eels under-20s in 2010-11, often playing with their feeder teams. Tom was the Michael Green (mod) Trophy winner in 1997.

The three played one A grade game together, in 2008, with their parents watching on – and have a photograph as a wonderful memento.

The Young boys’ careers coincide distinctly with the Walpoles’ – Rhys, Jake and Sean – and they have been great mates. Sean works for Tom as a plumber.

Tom was a spectator when the Bulls had their big day at Parramatta Stadium in 2015 which ended in a heart-breaking Sydney Shield grand final loss to Wentworthville. Tom, wanting to play a grade higher that season, watched most of that match before running out in the Ron Massey Cup grand

final, for Asquith against Mounties.

It was a crushing blow to lose John, also a highly respected as a businessman through his kitchen-bathroom renovation business that had stores at Parramatta and Hornsby, in 2019 but Bulls friends rallied around the family.

“It is a very special club and that shone through when we lost dad,” Tom said.

“I might get involved in coaching one day and I’ve already started to encourage the oldest of our two daughters to play footy; she halfway to coming around!”



THE WALPOLE FAMILY

WHEN SEAN WALPOLE BECAME JUST THE EIGHTH HILLS BULLS ‘IMMORTAL’ IN 2022 IT WAS NATURALLY A PROUD MOMENT.

But, typical of his selfless attitude towards his club and his belief in the manta of ‘Club Team Player’ he was just as with the Bulls breaking the Ron Massey Cup drought and winning their first premiership a few weeks later.

Sean took his games tally to over 300 in 2023, and is well short of hanging up the boots at age 27, saying, “I can’t move on Mondays I’m but I couldn’t think of life without playing for the Bulls”. It means he will most likely become the

first player in the past 20 years, when records have been meticulously kept, to reach 400 games. If it wasn’t for the two Covid interrupted seasons of 2020-21 and having a season as part of the Eels’ under-20 squad in 2015, which meant playing for feeder club Guildford in the Massey Cup, he would be closer to that mark. He returned to Crestwood the next season to be part of the Bulls’ inaugural Massey Cup team.

He is a role model to many with his devotion to the Bulls and the manner in which he conducts himself on and off the field. He stands, in the list of 300-plus games ‘Immortals’ with Craig Mulligan, Darryl Abbott, Martin Shanahan, Peter Heath, Chris Pearce, Mark Harvey and Robert Young.

“It was an incredible game, it was just disappointing we didn’t get the win,” he recalled. Hills’ Sydney Shield side led Ryde-

Eastwood 24-0 at half-time but we run down 26-24. “It was the turning point of our season though; we went on a run after that.

“To see the club made a special jersey for me to celebrate the milestone and people turning up with specially made shirts, and a lot of kids I coached coming down along with a lot of people who have been around the club for a while ... it was a very special day; they all kept it a secret from me.

“And they arranged the Massey Cup to play before us (Sydney Shield) so the boys could sit and enjoy the day; the club could not have done more for me.”

The standing of the Walpole family in Hills Bulls’ history is significant. Sean continues playing as skipper of the Sydney Shield side while playing several Ron Massey Cup matches in 2023. Rhys played 213 games before retiring in 2019, while Jake played more than 150 games up to 2017 (and was in Sydney Roosters’ under-20s

squad). All three played together in one Sydney Shield in 2017, a day the treasure. Parents Wayne and Dee were dedicated workers, Dee a constant at Crestwood’s canteen for many years and managed some of the boys’ teams and Wayne was a regular line marker and served on the committee.

It was older brother Rhys who was the catalyst of the Walpole family being introduced to Hills Bulls when he headed down to play in the under-8s in 1999. Younger brothers Jake and Sean started over the following seasons



and parents Wayne and Dee became regulars at Crestwood, always willing to pitch in to assist whatever activity was required.

“As a kid, both my parents were heavily involved with the club and both my brothers were playing, which meant we pretty much spent Saturdays helping mum set up the canteen in morning and we’d be there all day and Sunday morning before A-grade games were on,” reminisced Sean.



“My experience at Hills started when I was seven in 2003 and still continues in 2023. Throughout this time I’ve experienced the club as a player, a volunteer a fan and as a coach.

“I’ve had the privilege to win a competition in C-grade in 2014 with mates I’d be playing with for many years and to go from years of avoiding getting mercy-ruled to two years later winning the comp was truly special to experience with those boys.

“Being a part of the 2022 Ron Massey Cup premiership-winning squad and being there on grand final day was one of the greatest days I’ve had at this club, seeing the boys lift the trophy. I’ve also had the privilege of being involved with a group of boys as a coach and trainer and seeing boys grow up and become young men was very special.

“The club means everything to me; it’s where I’ve met am lot of lifelong mates. Each year I seem to meet someone new from the club and make a mate for life. Hills is truly like no other

in that sense. The majority of my employment opportunities have come through people who are affiliated with the club and I know many others have had similar experiences.

“The biggest thing for me about to the club is the connections you have with people at the club and the fact that these connections come in various forms whether that be teammates, coaching staff, board members, parents and supporters. I’ve made many lifelong mates through various aspects of the club.”

Wayne, who has had over 40 years’ experience in the police force and is currently detective chief inspector at NSW Police Force, recalled it was ‘Nabby’ (Bulls life member Ian McNab, a fellow policeman and Wayne’s great mate) who enticed the family to the club.

“We were working together then (from the academy class together in 1981),” Wayne said. “In his first year, Rhys played alongside Tom Young, Dan Mahoney, Ben Mooney, Kris Freeman and all became lifelong friends of the boys.

“Dee and I got involved with the club at first on the committee. I became a permanent barbie cook on Saturdays and line-marker during the week while Dee became a long-time canteen chick and team manager.

“I soon inherited the job of club registrar, taking over from Nabby; I’m pretty sure that’s the main reason he got me to the club, so he could get rid of that portfolio. The club had about 500 players then and it was a card system. I think then we were the second largest junior rugby league club in the country.”

Wayne went on the board for several years and was vice-president for HOW MANY years while Dee was part of the canteen committee.

“During the footy season, a normal Saturday for all the Walpoles was setting up the grounds, managing teams, working the barbie and canteen and, of course, watching our boys plays. If the seniors were at home, we would do it all again on a Sunday.

“At no time did Dee or I consider what we

did a chore. We loved it and it was one of the best times of our lives. The reason was the great people that we were with. We made lifelong friends as did our three boys.

“It would be remiss not to mention some of them and I hope I don’t offend by missing anyone. There are the Sullivans, Bev and Steve, who were a bedrock of our club, nicer people you will not find. We had the pleasure of ‘working’ with the likes of Dave Whicker. I reckon Dave and I marked lines from here to the moon, both at footy and baseball.

“Other great people are the Mahoneys, Moonies, the Youngs (RIP John) the Freemans, the Griffos, the Gremmos, Turners, McCafferys and Mark Stockdale. All were great people and over the years I cannot remember a harsh word said between any of us. They were the early days for us.

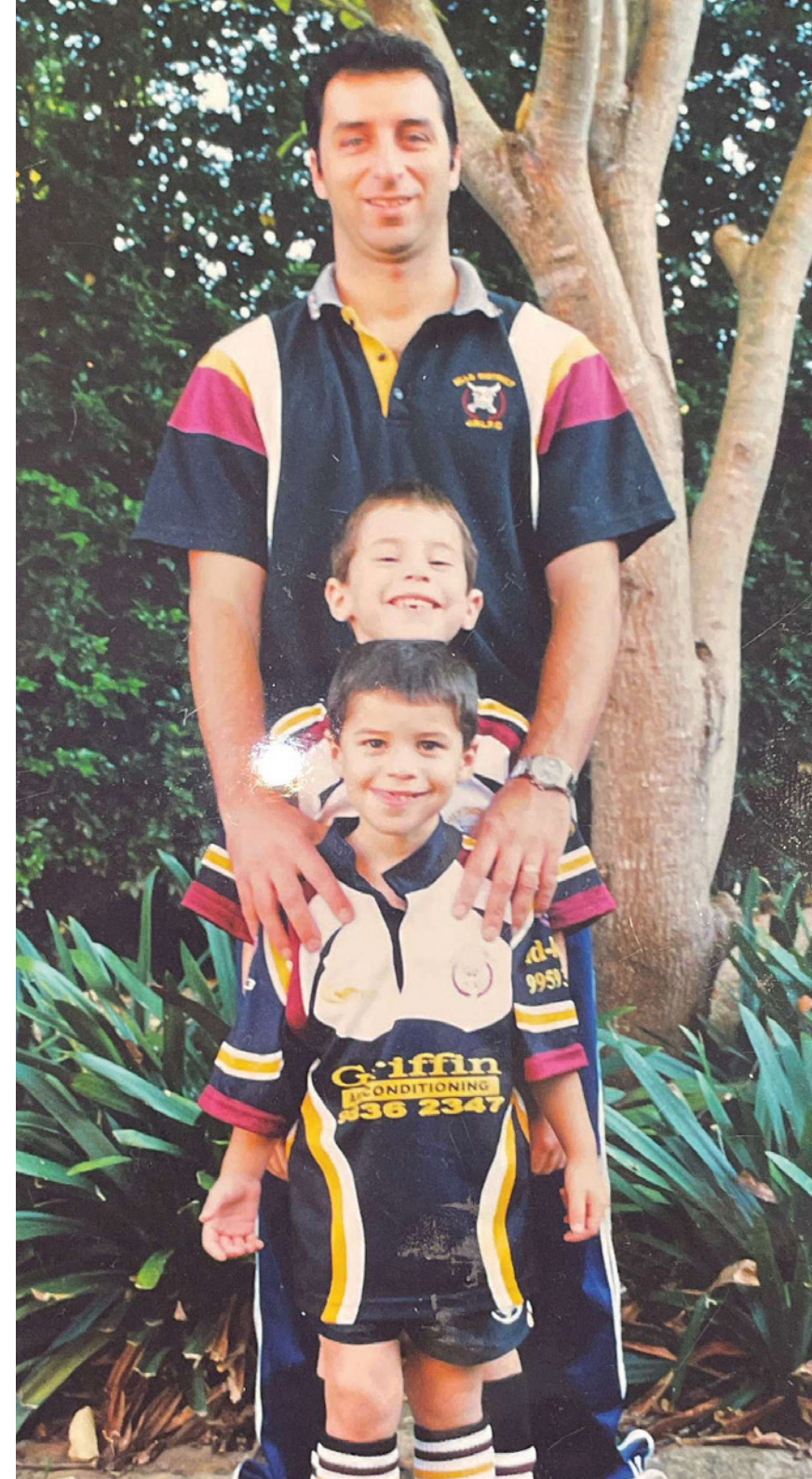
“Our family has been at the club for over 20 years and our involvement now is watching from the Hill. We continue



however to meet and make new friends each season, such is the culture of The Bulls.

“When I think of The Hills Bulls, I think of family, friends and great memories. That continues today, with families like the Hydes, Robinsons, Greches.

“The club is strong and there is a continuous stream of fresh faces coming through that will continue to strengthen the Bulls.”



STEVE MARKS

LIFE MEMBER STEVE MARKS READILY ADMITS THAT, HAD HE STARTED HIS JUNIOR FOOTBALL AT HILLS

and not the south-western Sydney suburb of Riverwood, he would have played more than one season of rugby league before turning to soccer. The St Joseph’s primary school environment, he remembers, was not a patch on the mighty Hills Bulls’.

It was only after Steve and his wife Suzie moved to Seven Hills initially, then Castle Hill, that wheels were put into motion that would see him become one of the Bulls’ most value workers and a life member.

“Why is my insignificant history lesson of someone who never made it as Bull or a league or any sport player relevant?” he smiled. “Because I think, had I, and just as importantly had my parents, experienced the community, family feel of the Bulls that I experienced with my sons, I would have kept playing league and probably been more confident as a person in my youth for it. I really sucked at soccer.”

It was 2003 when the Marks moved to Castle Hill and saw a Hills Bulls’ advertisement in the local paper that led them to enter son Mitchell in the under-6 mini-league team. The Reardons’ son Will was in the same team, coached by his father Matt, and after a few trial games Matt Reardon addressed the parents in the home dressing room, asking if one of them would volunteer to become team manager.

Steve takes up the story, “I naively asked,

STEVE MARKS

‘What’s involved?’ and in Matt’s bulldozing way, he said, ‘Great, we now have a manager,’ without telling me what was involved.

“I’m glad he did though as I, and the team, enjoyed a great year of footy. Even more auspiciously, we had none other than the club secretary, soon to be club president, Steve Sullivan, as our trainer. Two years later my second son, Jordan, joined the under-6s, a year under age as he had been training with his brother’s team for two years as part of my baby sitting duties.

“However, unlike myself, he returned to the same age group a year later and stayed for 11 years. I also managed his team and juggled quite a few hats over the next 15 years as a Bulls team manager, board member (eight years), touch football organiser, masters manager and player and under-16 (3s) coach. As a coach I made an excellent manager.”

Steve was elected to the board at the 2008 annual general meeting with his major role

being council liaison officer or “making sure they didn’t forget us when it came to ensuring Crestwood was in good order for the opening of each league season.” He also began his long association with the organisation of the touch football competition.

“However, by the end of 2010, it became apparent that the touch football competition money was being mismanaged and, as I was a keen and active touch football player, I was subsequently handed the duties of running the junior and senior touch football competitions,” he recalled. “Unfortunately I did not have the right type of nine-to-five job that allowed me time to set up for the junior touch competition so we closed that off for the 2011 season.

“In my first year on the board in 2009, the post global financial crisis was being played out and governments were handing out grants to keep the economy afloat at local levels. With the support of the committee that included presidents Leon Don and Glenn Starr

and secretary Kochie (Matt Reardon), I had successfully applied for and received for the club a \$15,000 grant to improve the lighting at Kellyville Park, of which the club paid the other 50 percent required for the lighting upgrade to be installed.” Much to Steve’s displeasure, the improved facilities at Kellyville that the Bulls had facilitated, were to be enjoyed by others with touch football being taken away from the venue.

Over an eight-year period, Steve Marks played a major role in gaining council and state government funding and support for works at Crestwood, even though many within the club (including Steve) felt the Bulls were too often giving too low a priority by Hills Shire Council. However, he worked hard to gain NSW Government and council support of \$60,000 for improved amenities facilities and the concrete terracing at Crestwood, both carried out by Glenn Starr.

His other responsibilities included coordinating the training roster for the many rugby league



1963 – 2023



teams. He remembers, “With a lack of enough training fields, I devised a training map that allowed for three teams on each of field 1 and 2, allocating 30 to 40 metres of each field each to be used concurrently during our most popular training requested days/times of Tuesdays and Thursday from 6pm to 7.30pm.

“You can imagine that not all coaches were very accurate at noting the metres allocated and some differences of opinion had been raised. All in all though, the club spirit was great during this time to share what inadequate field resources we had. We had the council officers come down to training nights to see our lack of training field allocations results, which eventually helped us to gain more fields later on.

“That said, with the help of the likes of Michael Gremmo, armed with his Bulls’ history lesson and detailed notes seemingly of every conversation he had ever had with every and any council officer to general manager, as well as Michael’s long list of helpful contacts

such as shock jock Ray Hadley and other influential dignitaries, and with president Glenn Starr and secretary Rick Palin, we attended multiple council meetings, often going round in circles to be straightened up by Michael’s detailed notes. We did manage to bring the council around, year after year, like Groundhog Day every pre-season.

“We got touch football back to the Showground as space at Kellyville got reduced for other associations’ expansions, while at the same time gained access to the Showground for pre-season league training. We got back to Torry Burn (Jasper Road) again for touch and utilised it for pre-season training and we even got to use the canteen building that the Gremmos built all those years ago.”

Steve Marks was instrumental in coordinating a game of musical chairs with local grounds to accommodate rugby league, Oztag and touch football with venues used including Crestwood 3, Coolong Reserve,



Francesco Crescent Reserve, Bella Vista Oval, Charles McLaughlin Reserve, Stanhope Reserve and Crestwood High School.

He pays tribute to the commitment of directors he witnessed first-hand. “All the other board members I served with were putting in lots of time too with the PDJRLFC association, going to suspension meetings and general monthly association meetings, organising sponsorships, canteen food, jerseys (so many jerseys and shorts and socks) and extensions to the buildings, including the permanent barbeque area and the automated scoreboards. Then there were the line markings, the footballs, the fund-raisers. Some of these members were self-employed, so while I enjoyed a monthly PAYG salary these club loyalists were forgoing real income.

“It would be amiss of me to not thank the following people who did so much while I rested and watched in awe: Glenn Starr, Matt Reardon, Leon Don, Leon Carroll, Sue Locke,

Robert Zecchin, John Abbott, Michael Gremmo, Paul Griffin, all the canteen helpers and all the coaches, managers and trainers and I give a special thank you for the great help I received from Bulls legends John Noble, Robert Watson, Barry Rudd and Brian Horder, whose help was invaluable during my earlier years running touch football, along with all the referees.

“I also have a great fondness for Ian Boardman who took over the running of touch football from me in 2019 when my increased work duties swamped me from being able to contribute further myself. And I have seen and been around many players and parents, such as the Gremmos and Abbotts, who have made great memories at the Bulls over generations and lasting friendships.

“I just want it known for those of us who come to the club without that history or bonded experience to the club, that we are all very welcome to start our own history with the Bulls as soon as we sign up.

“After all, 60 years is a long time for many stories to find a starting point and we can celebrate the start of new stories as much as the thousands of stories already etched in Bulls history.”

Steve Marks looks back fondly on his 20 years giving what he could for the mighty Bulls. A times it has been exhausting, frustrating but mostly extremely rewarding.

“Would I do it all again? Hell yeah!”



THE SHANAHAN FAMILY

A THIRD GENERATION OF THE SHANAHAN TRIBE ARE CONTINUING THE TRADITION OF WEARING THE BULLS COLOURS IN 2023...

... following in the footsteps of some of the most loyal servants of the club.

Brothers Mick and Kev are life members while Kev’s son Martin is a Bulls ‘immortal’ having played over 300 games (and is still coaching).

The late Mick Shanahan was the first to don the jersey, in the mid-1960s, before being joined by younger brother Kev. Mick played in A-grade side of 1971 that won the Bulls’ their first top-team premiership in 1971 and

was hooker right through the season before moving aside for teenager and future Australian international, Ron Hilditch, for the grand final.

Rather than spit the dummy at his misfortune, Mick, who was good enough to play President’s Cup for Parramatta (under-21s in those days), retired early but continued to serve the club as an off-field worker, including being A-grade manager for a decade, and served on the committee. He passed away in 2019.

Younger brother Kev was just as active - and loyal. He also played A-grade and A-reserve for many seasons, finishing in 1980 after the senior teams had moved from Jasper Road to Crestwood Reserve that season.

“I became mates with lots of great blokes at the club including Mick Gremmo, Bobby Collings, Donny Halliday and Gordon Marshall,” Kev recalled. “Among my memories of my playing

THE SHANAHAN FAMILY

days are the road runs from Jasper Road Park which would more often than not finish up at the Bull and Bush for a few light refreshments. Another highlight was the atmosphere at Crestwood and I specifically remember the cheer of the crowd when I made a strong try-saving tackle one afternoon in front of the hill.

“By the time I finished playing, my sons had started playing at the Bulls and I continued my direct involvement in a range of roles as the four boys all played plenty of footy and made great mates. I was involved as a team manager as well as a committee member for a number of years.

“As a manager, I enjoyed working with a lot of great blokes and coaches including Ray Devine and Barry Rudd. I was also fortunate (or unfortunate?) enough to travel on two end of season trips - the first to New Zealand where the Bulls under-13s of 1981, which included my son Chris, took on local sides from places such as Pakuranga. Nine years later, I found myself driving a mini-bus to

Jindabyne as my youngest son Marty and the Bulls under-15s enjoyed an end-of-season ski trip with plenty of stories to tell.”

Kev took on the role of registrar in the early years of computerised membership records and also served as equipment manager which involved tasks such as ‘branding’ the old leather balls with a hot iron to burn the Bulls name into the leather before synthetic balls were introduced.

“Other than those already mentioned, the Hills Bulls club enabled my family and I to meet and spend time with some wonderful people and families,” he said with pride.

“Whilst I can’t remember all of them, some prominent club people who symbolise the great things about the club include Ross Crawley, Barry L’Estrange, Pancho Ryan, Tim O’Brien, Greg Harris, Brian Witt and Terry Gill.



“The club has produced heaps of fond memories, from the real life young bull being let loose from a panel van during a grand final at McCredie Park, to post-match functions at venues such as the Bull and Bush, the bowling club and the sporting club. Presentation days held using the back of a truck as a stage down at Crestwood also became a memorable tradition.”

Kev’s four sons Brendan, Chris, Kieran and Marty all played for the Bulls. And their children have taken the link to three generations of Bulls players. Marty went on to become one of the club’s eight ‘Immortals’ as part of the elite group to have played 300 games for the Bulls.

Chris remembers life was so hectic in their Christopher St, Baulkham Hills, home

with prolific training and playing shuttles that their mother had to get her driving licence in her 40s just to keep pace.

Kieran’s daughter Jessica is in the 2023 women’s team with Kieran acting as a trainer. Marty has two boys playing, Blake in the under-18s and Cooper (under-14s), the side Marty is coaching while also acting as a trainer for the under-18s. Chris’s son Caden is a member of the under-9 side and Chris has coached the team for the past two years.

Brendan stopped playing at the age of 19, while Chris and Marty played into their 30s, often in the same team. They were in the initial Metropolitan Cup squad when the club made the step up to inter-district football in 1990, Marty as one a small front-rower and Chris as a fullback/five-eighth. They were in the Metro Cup second grade together in 1995, the Bulls’ last year in the competition. Marty returned and played spasmodically until he was 32 in 2007.

“My youngest memories are of watching dad play at Jasper Road and all weekends spent at Crestwood, playing footy or running around between games,” recalled Marty. “Most of my oldest friends are from the Bulls.”

Marty has the incredible feat marked on his playing resume of scoring more than 60 tries in the first season of mini-footy, as an under-7 player, in 1982. His Bulls team played several curtain-raisers at NRL matches to showcase the new modified game.

He is now a member of the Bulls’ coaching and development panel and the protection and information officer.

Chris left soccer to join the Bulls under-9s and says the club then “became a way of life.”

“I quickly became attached to the club, that loyalty and the love of being part of it,” he said.

“My earliest memories are watching dad play at Jasper Oval in the mid-1970s. I remember Marty as a baby, sitting with mum on the hill

THE SHANAHAN FAMILY



and getting cleaned up by a ball that got kicked their way. He was tough even then.”

Chris lives at Kellyville Ridge but says it was never considered that his children would play for the Bushrangers or the Rouse Hill Rhinos. “We had to travel the extra 10 minutes to get to the Bulls. We couldn’t play anywhere else; this is our club.”

The influence of father Kev and uncle Mick have been significant for the Shanahan brothers. When asked what was the legacy their father passed down, Marty replies, “Service. He shows us that you have to do all you can to help other people out.”

Chris added, “Just determination; he was just committed to it; he loved it.”

Kev is 79 now but still gets down to watch his grandchildren play. “He used to be the loudest man on the hill when we were growing up, abusing refs left right and centre,” laughed Chris, “But as he got older he got quieter; he’s slowing down a bit.”

Marty and Chris enjoy those times and catching up with former teammates and friends from their early years at the club.

“It’s really good to catch up with everyone and they still see themselves as Bulls even

though they mightn’t have turned up for a while,” said Marty at the annual Nathan Gremmo Shield day at Crestwood.

“That’s the legacy of this club in their lives. There are plenty of boys I played with, who may not have a physical involvement but are sponsors or will contribute to the fundraising days.

“That bond is pretty strong, stronger than most clubs.”



THE ORLEY FAMILY

RYAN ORLEY IS PERHAPS DIFFERENT TO MOST PARENTS WHO HAVE BECOME VALUED MEMBERS OF THE HILLS BULLS ‘GO-TO TEAM’.

His association began before he had sons playing at Crestwood, rather than because of it.

Ryan played from a 10-year-old to under-17s before taking up a coaching role in 2000 at the age of 21. It was several years later before his fours started their long journeys as players, with all still donning the Bulls jersey during winter.

They are Jack, 16 (11 years/140 games), Jack was also a Col Sutton Award Receipt

in 2022, Lane, 14 (10 years/132 games), Logan (7 years/86 games), 13, William, 9 (5 years/57 games), while they have a cousin, Hayden, who has also been a long-time junior player with the club.

Ryan, a member of the board and part of the coaching and development panel, has carried out several roles at the club.

He is the ground manager at Crestwood on Saturday junior day and Sunday senior day, and assists in a similar role with Oztag. It’s easy to see that a lot of his ‘spare’ time is directed at the Bulls.

And he still finds time to coach. Ryan has coached every grade from under-6s to C-grade (under-18s) over the years and in 2023 coached the under-9 side and board member of the club.

“The Orleys are a typical family from Hills; brothers playing and sons continuing

THE ORLEY FAMILY

on tradition,” said president Michael Gremmo. “Ryan been in coaching for the two years while devoting more time by stepping onto the board and assist with running the club in a few capacities.

“He puts up his hand in typical Bulls style and nothing is a problem. He is down there every Saturday and Sunday ground managing and blue shirting and also running between his four sons’ matches – on top of his Oztag involvement, ground management and assisting.

“He really is a valuable member of the club and I’m greatly appreciative of how much he puts in.”

Ryan reciprocates with, “Being part of the Bulls means everything to me. I have four boys who all play here, from 16s to nines, who love it. It means a lot to be part of something you believe in.

“Being the ground manager and organising all the volunteers give me an appreciation of what is involved running a club of this side and how valuable the enthusiasm of those volunteers is.

“That’s why this club is so successful; it’s the people who want to out in the effort. We are volunteer based here, and you need those people who want to put in the effort and do it so willingly.

“By looking after grounds and team of volunteers who come in each week, I see those who put out the cones at 7am and are here for hours or go home then come back. It’s a team effort but good management makes the team easier to function, and we are strong there too.”

Jack Orley is into his 11th season as a Bulls player while William passed the five-year mark in 2022, despite being only nine.



THE MARSHALL FAMILY

ONE OF THE MOST DEVOTED HILLS BULLS FAMILIES OVER THE PAST DECADE OR MORE HAVE CERTAINLY BEEN THE MARSHALLS.

Parents Graham and Tracey have given up endless hours for the rugby league and Oztag activities while their three children, Brayden, Brooke and Georgia have worn the Bulls colours with pride but have never thought their duties finished there, often helping with off-field requirements.

The Marshalls, as an entire family, were awarded the inaugural Nathan Gremmo Community Service award in 2017, and remain among the hardest workers for Hills Bulls Sports.

“Our family started when Brayden was playing soccer on Crestwood 3 and was asked if he was coming back next year and he said he wanted to play the cool footy up on the other fields at Crestwood 1. So we registered him in the under-7s and Matt Reardon was his coach,” said Tracey.

“The following year, Graham started helping out and then ended up coaching. Back in those days, parents were to be helping at the canteen and barbeque and, as only a few would turn up to help, Graham and Brayden would do the barbeque and I would help in the canteen before the games.

THE MARSHALL FAMILY

“As with all clubs, parent assistance was hard, so Ang decided to pay kids to work in the canteen and asked our daughter Brooke. Then a few years later, Georgia ended up in the canteen too.

“Brayden was in Kai Don’s kindy class, and the discussion of Oztag came up with Mel when she said Leon (Don) took off two weeks every year to type up the rego forms. So I offered to assist; that’s when there were only 800 registrations, then the following year was 1200 then 1800 and 2200!”

Other than winning the Nathan Gremmo Community Service award in 2017, ironically after Tracey had suggested a community service award at a previous board meeting, with no inclination it might be directed at her family, Brayden was awarded the Colin Sutton award as Junior Clubman of the Year the same year, and again in 2018.

“We have watched the club grow from strength to strength over the past 10 years, consistently

having large numbers of juniors playing rugby league and Oztag,” Tracey added.

“To witness, in 2022, Hills Bulls winning every junior award with Parramatta district shows the devotion to development that the club invests back into grassroots. Another proud achievement has been watching the senior rugby league competition become stronger through our Sydney Shield and Ron Massey Cup teams from the many years of support shown by members of the club such as Paul Griffin, Mick Gremmo, Michael Withers and Aaron Gonzalez to eventually winning the 2022 Ron Massey Cup.

“In Oztag, a concept started by Leon Don to provide children with another sport to play in summer, has a competition every night of the week with both junior and senior teams. Additionally, starting in 2021, there has been a senior winter competition with both men’s and mixed teams. With something which started as a dare to dream, to watch our Oztag

representative program grow to become the 2023 champions is just wonderful.”

Graham Marshall coached for four seasons until he became self-employed and could no longer devote the time on training nights. Yet he continued to serve the club, running the representative area of Oztag and coaching rep girls’ teams. “It was a lot of fun, to see how quickly they developed which was rewarding,” Graham said.

“As Oztag started to grow, it was very obvious it needed more than just Leon doing all the work with help from Rick Palin. The rep program is massive now, on top of local competition.

“I always wanted to achieve club championships and, having ticked that massive box off, suppose I could walk away now but I love the club that much. . As much as it’s a lot of work, you get a lot of satisfaction out of watching kids and evolution of the club.”

Graham’s eldest daughter, Brooke, still plays



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as does Georgia while Brayden also played for years. Graham has coached all three and Tracey has been a much-valued active member of the Oztag and rugby league clubs and still works in the canteen on match days.

The Marshalls have also taken Hills Oztag to another level through facilitating custom-made tag-shorts for the teams to wear for the past six years. Manufactured on contract by OES (Oztag Equipment Sales), Brayden Marshall provides customized Bulls shorts and tights with the Bulls logo and the southern cross logo which is included in the rugby league teams’ strips in tribute to Nathan Gremmo. The initiative has proved very popular with players and has also become a handy revenue earner for the club.

The Marshalls’ oldest daughter Brooke still plays Oztag and regular represents at the state championships. Sister Georgia also plays, as does Brayden. Graham has coached all three in rep teams.



COACHING, DEVELOPMENT AND THE BULLS ACADEMY

**IT WAS IN 2015,
GOING INTO
2016, WHEN THE
BULLS MADE
THE IMPORTANT
STRATEGIC DECISION
TO TAKE COACHING
AND DEVELOPMENT
TO A NEW LEVEL.**

And in the years since, Hills have developed a system that is the envy of many other clubs.

As the club passes its 60th anniversary the process of becoming a coach is as stringent as it has ever been, all in the name of having the right people in place to mentor the

young players who wear the jersey and to also articulate the club's important values.

And since that time, the annual mini-football clinics for children aged four to eight and the Bulls Development Academy aimed at 11-13 year-olds has become an integral part of the club's culture and its subsequent success. Incidentally, 2016 also saw the first girls team fielded by the Bulls, in the under-15s with our side (coached by Matt Rennie) winning the grand final.

The Bulls Academy was fronted by Mark Mahoney and he has been integral to its success since.

Daniel Pollard helped put together the first mini clinic, run by Matt Rennie, in 2016.

Boys and girls who had not played rugby

league previously were invited to attend as an introduction to the sport. It was seen also as an introduction to the club and its processes for the parents and families too.

It was aimed at giving the kids an insight into the game under mini rules and the hope was that it excited them and they'd want to come back and register as a player; then enjoying and want to come back the following year and year after.

Sam Rutherford is doing an outstanding job in continuing the tradition at those clinics while running the program and the club has been seeing the benefits of that strategy over the past six or seven years.

Hills had great success during the 1980s-1990s in the development area under the guidance of ??????? but by the early 2000s it was felt by some in the club that it had lost its emphasis. Barrie Jones, Mark Mahoney, Michael Gremmo and Paul Griffin felt there was need for change and they designed a new structure, with the academy an important

concept in encouraging and educating the more talented young footballers.

“As part of the academy set-up, we tended to cover coaching, player talent, player education, club culture and things like medical, diet, hydration as the kids became older,” said Mark Mahoney.

“It’s important to give guidance to kids aged 12-13 and about to start their representative football journey. You start to have conversations around looking after themselves and looking after their bodies so they can start to achieve some of their goals.

“Some of these kids are exceptionally talented but you find that what comes out of these programs such as the academy is that you get kids who have never really had much of a chance but suddenly blossom under the environment of inclusiveness and education.

There are always three or four amongst the group who were playing in division two or three teams and were happy to do so with their mates but their competitive

juices are ignited and they start to bloom a little more (as part of the academy).

“That’s what the academy is about, opening their eyes to the opportunities that are out there and teaching young players that, if they work hard and consistently, and set themselves a goal that is aligned to their personal dreams and expectations, then go after it, they can achieve anything.”

Making the coaches better too was quickly adopted as a coaching and development priority.

It started with having prospective coaches of the youngest age groups involved in the clinics as an opportunity to assess them during their involvement and to educate them further. For many years, in the six to eight year old space, fathers would volunteer to coach their son’s or daughter;’ teams but may not have had any formal coaching training other than their own playing experience.



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That has changed with so much online information available alongside the staged coaching certificate structure.

Craig Culnane, who has had years of experience at NRL level and was briefly Jason Taylor’s assistant coach at the Parramatta Eels, now heads the club’s coaching and development program. The ‘C and D’ panel also includes Ryan Orley, Martin Shanahan and Mark Mahoney. Previously Barrie Jones and Peter Beck gave great service in that area.

“We’ve been fortunate to always have a good quality of people wanting to help grow develop the kids and coaches,” said Mahoney. “Matt Reardon and Matt Rennie gave enormous service to this club to in that area and were extremely successful but they’ve done their bit and deserved to move although they still contribute in many areas.

“Craig Culnane would be the highest-credentialled coach we have and is a wonderful person and educator. He is an exceptional mentor of coaches and players.

He loves the game and the football club; he’s become a wonderful asset for us.

“Ryan has been a breath of fresh air too; he has his finger on the pulse in and around the age groups.”

There is a strict process in place around the appointment of coaches for the thirty-something teams that wear the Bulls colours each season. Every coach, whether they had the role with that team the previous year or not, must complete an online application form which collects information about them, their coaching experience, qualifications, the nominated team they would like to coach, and other data. The panel will interview every applicant in December-January, then send its recommendations to the board to sign off on, or reject.

It’s all part of the new age professional and consistent standards Hills Bulls aspire to achieve – and part of the goal that everyone knows his or her role and is given the best opportunity to carry it out as efficiently as possible.



TESTIMONIALS

MATTHEW BRADY, PARRAMATTA EELS ELITE PATHWAYS OPERATIONS MANAGER.

During my time as the general manager of the Parramatta junior league, I have had the privilege of witnessing the continued growth and success of the Hills Bulls, a community sporting club that is celebrating its 60th anniversary. Over the past 10 years, the Hills Bulls have shown a strong focus on all areas of football, from developing under six mini-camps to tag competitions, playing in the NSWRL major competitions and being successful without the backing of a leagues club.

What has been more impressive during this time is that they have become the largest

club in the Parramatta district, which is a testament to their dedication and commitment to the community. The Hills Bulls have developed a philosophy of 'club, team, player' which has gone on to strengthen the ties of the community with the club.

One of the most remarkable things about the Hills Bulls is their overwhelming desire and culture to develop any player, regardless of ability. They give everyone a home to play football and create an environment where players can thrive and grow. This approach has helped the club become a hub for football enthusiasts and has enabled them to produce some of the best players in the region.

Overall, the Hills Bulls have made, and continue to make, significant contributions to the development of football in the Parramatta district. As the general manager

of the Parramatta Junior Rugby League, I was proud to have the Hills Bulls as one of our member clubs and I look forward to their continued success in the years to come.

DAVID BAUMANN

Had five years out of the game, was in the Parramatta NRL squad, played Flegg, 20s, NSW Cup, felt needed a break. Was 21 when stopped and 26 came back. Last year NSW Cup 2009. Almost 35.

James Bustani came down, trying to build a team for that season. Came down in boardshorts, pretty out of shape, got fit and it was a good year. Always a back-rower.

Didn't know much about the club when I came down, headed by Griffo and Gremmo, could see it was a great family club right through from seniors to juniors. Tugun Seahawks.

One year away, been here now, only survivor from Sydney Shield 2016 grand final. Gave that grand final away and been trying to get a

second chance ever since. Lived at Seven Hills.

Really great family club, lot of mateship and see so many boys come up into the seniors who have played all their junior footy here, they are not about chasing money of playing elsewhere, they love the club that much and just want to stay here. That's why I have stuck around so much because of the passion and commitment from the players and the staff. My girls play Oz Tag and my young one does cheerleading – it's common for a lot of people to be really involved.

ALLAN COOK

What a wonderful achievement for Hills Bulls to celebrate their 60 years anniversary, a club formed with a total playing roster of only three teams in 1963 and which has now grown to be one of the strongest and highly respected junior rugby league clubs in Australia.

On this outstanding occasion and milestone in the club's evolution, I would like to recount how I became a real

Bulls tragic and lifetime supporter.

We moved into our new home in Gleeson Avenue, Baulkham Hills, in late 1972 in a new subdivision located near Jasper Road Oval, home of the Hills District Bulls. We had no idea of the club, its history, its reputation or whatever. But things were to change rapidly over the next few years

Being an ex-player from the towns of Wagga and Narrandera which fielded teams in Group 20 in the Riverina region, I was a keen supporter of rugby league and most Saturdays and Sundays I would walk next door and sit on the old Jasper Oval hill to watch the various Hills' senior and junior teams in action. Right from the start, I was tremendously impressed by the camaraderie, mateship, determination and efforts of players throughout the various Hills teams.

My son Shane joined the club in 1974 in the under-8s and I progressed to a proud father screaming my support from the sidelines and paying attention to how his coaches were



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guiding him. About this time, my involvement with the Hills club was to change forever when one night I answered a knock on the door to greet Mick Gremmo (snr), current president Michael's legendary father, who was then coaching the Hills under-16s. Mick explained that, because of work commitments, he needed a replacement coach to run his side for a couple of nights when he would be working late.

I absolutely loved the experience with Mick's under-16s players, being very friendly and cooperative in helping me bumble my way through. I decided there and then that I would like to become more involved with the Hills club and coaching seemed the ideal path. After that first experience I was able to coach a few young teams in the mid-1970s but, because of work and study commitments, I could not really commit to coaching until I was appointed to the under-15s side in 1981.

For the next 10 years I coached teams ranging from under-16s in 1982 to the Metropolitan

Cup in 1990/1991 when I retired from coaching and moved into club management. During those years it gave me tremendous satisfaction to work with literally hundreds of young players who all displayed the unique camaraderie, mateship, determination and teamwork which is and always has been the core DNA of the Bulls club.

As I reflect on these days, I am so proud of the number of these players who have forged highly successful careers, established their own businesses and became real pillars in their communities. It gives me immense pleasure when I visit Crestwood Oval to see many of these former players' sons and daughters playing for the mighty Bulls.

Although it is not possible (space limitations) to identify the many outstanding players and teams referred to above, I really would like to record the performance of the following teams I coached in 1984, 1989 and 1990.

The under-18s in 1984 were first division

premiers, winning their semi-final 11-2, preliminary final 7-0 and grand final 10-0. In three really tough games, they did not concede a single try during the final series. All members of this team were Bulls district born and bred with many of them proceeding to the A Grade and Metropolitan Cup sides in later years.

In 1989 the Hills A grade qualified for their first grand final since the 1970s. The side played strongly but lost to traditional rivals Wentworthville narrowly in the decider.

METRO CUP YEAR 1

Hills were the last team accepted into the Metropolitan Cup in 1990 and were tipped by all to be wooden spooners with many critics suggesting that the Hills Bulls were only accepted to avoid a weekly bye.

Ignoring these negative and pessimistic predictions Hills played strongly throughout the season and in a major upset (in the

experts' opinion) defeated the previously unbeaten Ryde Eastwood side in the last competition match to qualify for the major semi-final. In a classic match in which the team produced the legendary 'Langers' move for a great try, Hills again defeated Ryde Eastwood to move to the grand final.

However, the fairytale was to end there with Ryde Eastwood defeating a gallant Hills side to win the 1990 Metropolitan Cup.

Following my retirement from coaching in 1991, I joined the committee and served in various positions in the following years.

During this period it was my pleasure to work with so many dedicated and hard-working people who gave so much of their time (and money) to ensure the club could operate effectively and in fact expand to cater for the growing population in the Hills and surrounding districts

Because we had no support /access to a leagues or licensed club funding, and even

though the club has always enjoyed great support and sponsorship from many local businesses, the continuing expansion and development of the Hills district meant the committees were always seeking to identify and secure new and recurrent funding sources.

Some of the more innovative funding sources identified and secured included winning the contract to deliver Sydney White Pages telephone books to thousands of homes and businesses throughout the Hills and Parramatta phone districts, sourcing and installing a huge container at Crestwood Oval to receive and process aluminium cans for Comalco. Whilst funding sources such as these provided a great initial cash flow injection it was critical that the club identify an annual and long term plan, earning sufficient revenue to enhance our solvency and provide ongoing operating and capital funding. These plans and funding sources were initially achieved with the establishment and development of the Hills District Touch Football Competition in the late



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1970s (1978/79). From its humble beginning as a Sunday morning (men's only) competition at Jasper Oval it has now grown to one of, if not the largest and most well supported, touch football competitions in Australia. In addition to the touch football competitions for men, women, girls and boys the club has established and runs an OZ Tag competition which similarly caters for a wide and increasing players base.

The growth and outstanding continuing success of these competitions is a wonderful achievement by the current and previous boards and senior management. In this regard, I have the greatest respect and admiration for the current board who I believe have developed and maintained a culture and reputation which will continue to grow in the years ahead.

I congratulate the club on the 60-year anniversary!

ANDREW ODELL, PARENT OF ETHAN ODELL, AND A COACH FOR THE PAST SIX YEARS.

I have been at the club for seven years and there have been some big changes over that time, right from the addition of the Massey and Shield teams, to the more recent additions of the women's teams and the all-abilities team. This is helping many more members of the community to be involved and play at the club.

As a parent of a child with special needs, to see him welcomed and encouraged by his peers has been heart-warming. The club has even started an all-abilities team so that my son and many other children and adults with disabilities can stay and be involved in playing rugby league.

TESTIMONIALS



TESTIMONIALS

ARAN, EDEN AND CADE PUDDLE, HILLS BULLS MEMBERS, 2016-2021

A huge happy 60th birthday to the Mighty Hills Bulls! My family and I had the incredible honour of being part of the Bulls for five years, before moving to Queensland. We were so fortunate to be part of this fantastic generational club. The Bulls are a family of dedicated staff and volunteers who are truly committed to giving every person the opportunity to succeed on the footy field, but even more importantly to become better people off it.

DANIEL MAHONEY WHO PLAYED AT HILLS FOR 14 YEARS FROM THE AGE OF

SIX TO SEVENTEEN, BEFORE RETURNING TO PLAY SYDNEY SHIELD IN 2014/2015

My experience at Hills was a great one. I lived and breathed footy for a large majority of my life where my love for the game stemmed from my experiences at Crestwood. Whether it was from having sleepovers with my mates after a hard game on Saturday, to seeing each other the very next day on Sundays when A-Grade would play at Crestwood. We would spend hours riding our bikes around the Crestwood parklands, playing footy on the second field, or getting up to no good whilst all three grades were on.

I learnt from a young age that we were never the biggest, the strongest, or most talented footballers. But we trained harder than any other team in the competition which brought us closer together. We learnt from a very

young age if we played together as a team, more often than not we will beat a team of individuals. This is how I choose to live my life to this day, work harder than everyone else to meet my own expectations.

I have a core group of mates who I played with for a large portion of my time at Hills. My first season was 1998 and I played in the same team as my younger brother Mitchell and one of my best mates to this day, Tom Young. My dad, Mark Mahoney, and uncle Paul Griffin were our coaches in our first team in 1998, and were also my last coaches at Hills in the Sydney Shield in 2015. Shortly after I started playing at Hills, Ben Mooney joined our team closely followed by Rhys Walpole before under-9s where we remain best mates to this day. We have all been a part of each other's bridal parties and shared many different experiences together good and bad.

I had so many great coaches, mentors and positive influences throughout my time at Crestwood. Apart from my dad, one bloke who



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springs to mind is Mick Mosely. Mick was our coach for a couple of years at quite a young age and he really instilled what hard work is and being a team is all about. We had some success with Mick early which really accelerated my love for the game and he brought out my competitive nature in me. My dad was and still is my biggest supporter. He always made me feel as if I could achieve anything.

I always loved watching the older boys from Hills play as a young kid. I really looked up to the likes of Heath L'Estrange, Blake Green, Pat Inskip, Jason Baitieri, Jamie Buhner and the likes. They were all paving their own paths in the game and showed me it was possible to make a living from doing something you loved. So you could say these blokes were indirectly big influences on me even though they had no idea.

I would not be the same person I am without growing up around Crestwood. The club taught me how important team sports are in which I will instil in my kids as they get older. My kids

can play whatever they want when they grow up, as long as they are doing something team-based. I can only hope they love whatever it is they choose as much as I love the Hills Bulls.

DAVID AZAR

I first joined the Bulls when I was four years old in 2012. I love this club so much and have so many fond memories here. I will never forget my first try, against St Marys in 2012, back when the coach stayed on the field with the players. Since then, I've spent the next 11 years playing for the club I love, entering this year as the 36th most capped player. The Hill Bulls have supplied me with nothing but the fondest of memories and the most amazing opportunities. Such as playing on the field at half-time during the Eels v Rabbitohs on March 27, 2015, meeting NRL players and going out onto the field with them. And, of course, going to Queensland with my team in 2021. The Bulls are all about leaving everything out on the field. I will never forget

my preliminary final in 2020, where our team was down 16-4 with five minutes to go. Two successful right-side attacking plays saw tries to me and my teammate Patrick Johns. Patty converted his own try after the siren to send us to golden point, where we'd win thanks to a length-of-the-field try by Tomas Schnider. The club has provided me with some of the best coaches I've ever met, like Laurie O'Brien, Matthew Kelly and Simon Azar who helped me learn footy and develop my game. The club has also introduced me to some of the best mates that I've ever made, I'm eternally grateful for what the Bulls have done for me.

SIMON GWYNNE

I started with the Bulls in 1989 as a 12 year old boy playing rugby league and from my very first game I felt part of this great family club. I noticed very early on the amazing community spirit and the positive impact parents had by giving up their personal time to help build the strongest club in the Hills

district. That community spirit still stands the test of time today and it's one of the reasons my wife Alison and I brought our three children (Sienna, Billie and Koby) back to the bulls to play rugby league and Oz Tag. My wife and I also coach at the club and we really enjoy the fun, family, community atmosphere.

GWYNNE FAMILY
(ALISON, BILLIE,
KOBIE, SIENNA)

Alison: I am proud to be a part of the Bulls. I came to know the Bulls almost 10 years ago when my children started playing. I started as a parent, then a volunteer, a team manager and a coach.

What I love the most about our club (and it's hard to pick one) is the great reputation we have. We are well mannered, humble, kind and our good sportsmanship precedes us at both club and representative level. We celebrate our

wins respectfully and learn from our losses. This is important for me as a parent because my own children (who play and referee) are around like-minded children, parents and coaches.

Some of my best friendships have been formed with parents within this club, either on the sidelines cheering on our kids, or watching our senior footy at Crestwood on a Sunday arvo. Friends are the family that we choose, and our Bulls family are irreplaceable.

Billie: My name is Billie, and I started at the bulls in 2014 as a seven year old, playing my first game of Oz Tag. When I was 12, I played rugby league in a team of boys in a boys comp because we didn't have enough girls (for our own team). When I turned 14, we had enough girls to make a team, this team was the first girl team playing rugby league for the Bulls ever.

I love my teammates, my coaches, the friends I've made and the atmosphere. I have made my best memories at Bulls and I hope that when I grow up my own children will follow



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in the footsteps of my parents, my siblings and I, and play for the Bulls as well.

Koby: I have been playing at the Bulls since I was five. I am now 12 and have had some of the best memories of my life at this club.

I love the community and how welcoming everybody is. I've been able to travel to places such as Coffs Harbour, Tuggerah and Shellharbour to represent our club at Oz Tag. I have loved every year at this club and will never forget the memories, and hope there are many, many more to come in the future.

Sienna: I first played for the Hills Bulls when I was seven in my first Oz Tag team. This year will be my 10th year of Oz Tag and to say this club has bought me some of my favourite memories is an understatement. The atmosphere here is unbelievable, and there is such a strong sense of community, between not just me and my teammates, but between everyone I meet on and off the field. Every year I go to Coffs to cheer on my siblings and the support our

club has for our players is unbelievably strong. Some of my best friendships have been made through Bulls and the family our club has built is irreplaceable. I am now a referee for the club, and to be able to see the impact of our community on kids as young as six years old is such a blessing. I'm beyond grateful for the family we have established. Go the Bulls!

HEATH L'ESTRANGE

My memories of the greatest club of all - my first year with the Bulls was in 1991 and my last year as a player was 2020 - include:

- Sliding down the Hill at Crestwood Oval on cardboard boxes whilst cheering on C Grade, A Reserves, A Grade and Metro Cup on a Sunday afternoon.
- Getting to Crestwood at 6am watching all the dads (Barry, life member) set up the fields for a day of footy
- Presentation day on the back of Mr Leihn's table top trucks

- Winning our premiership in 1996 after losing five straight grand finals with my best mates
- Winning the C grade grand final, playing up two years above my age
- Four of my five groomsmen being Hills boys
- Road runs around Peel Road and Chapel Lane. Also Hills sprints on the Hill at the rear of Crestwood for every try scored against us.
- Being ball boy for my brother Wade’s grand final in 1990 at Parramatta Stadium.
- Playing Ron Massey Cup for the Hills Bulls 29 years after starting at the club and keeping a promise that I would always retire as a Bull.
- Playing in a grand final for Manly in 2008 and seeing Hills District Bulls listed as my junior club on my profile for game day.
- Ray Warren and Ray Hadley calling my name and referencing the Hills Bulls in every game I played that they called.
- Making my NRL debut in 2004 with ex-Hills teammates there watching

I love that I’m still able to walk down to Crestwood on a Sunday afternoon and see so many friendly and familiar faces. It feels like home

My coaches over the years, Paul and Mark Harvey, Gary Radford, Dean McCarry, John Noble, Erol Gwynne, Ian Brown, Barr Rudd and Grant Leaf (to name a few) shaped my childhood and taught me how to play the greatest game of all with respect and integrity.

I owe my passion, skill and toughness to my three older brothers Ryan, Wade, Sean who taught me to never take a backwards step when on the field with your mates representing your club.

My parents Barry and Sharyn ensured that our life for a very long time was Hills District Bulls. Through them I understood the importance of all the poor mothers in the canteen week in week out and fathers setting up the fields for a busy weekend of mini, mod and senior footy.

I love that we still call everyone’s parents by

Mr and Mrs as this was a sign of respect (for example, Mr Horder, Mr Cook, Mr Gremmo).

JAYDEN GRIFFIN

Where to begin with the Bulls. This club means a lot to myself, my family and the community that is a part of the club.

My family first joined the club in 1988, when my dad played his first year at the club in the C grade competition. Since then he has gone on to be an important member of the Hills Bulls club for what it is today. The club has developed dramatically over my playing career, from what the club was back then to what it is now is unbelievable and a true credit to everyone who has been involved, being one of the biggest junior clubs in the district, taking out four of the major awards last year in 2022.

I first starting playing for the Bulls when I was three and have loved putting the Hills jersey on ever since, now being in my 19th season for the



club. I have been a coach, a long-time player and also a trainer for the under-18s this year. This club truly provides lifelong memories and mateship that I will cherish forever. To be a part of moments such as Sean Walpole’s 300th game for the club is a pretty special thing as it doesn’t happen very often and also to do it alongside a good mate means a lot. The motto ‘club, team, player’ is truly what the club is about. Hills is a huge family club and it is a big reason why a lot of players love playing for the Bulls.

I have been privileged enough to have played for the Bulls from such a young age and grateful to play with a lot of different blokes who I call mates today, learning from many different great coaches and trainers and learning many different things other than just footy from many people involved throughout the club. I have played in many finals series throughout my career as a Bull and been fortunate to have won a few as well, my last being for C grade in 2017. However none of those times can top the feeling of winning our first ever Ron Massey

Cup in 2022. Although I did not play a game for them throughout the season, to be able to be part of it and to see the hard work that many individuals had put in to get to that point over the past 10 years is one thing I will never forget.

Hayden husband of Jenny Byrne, who sons Ryan (U6s to A grade) and David (U7s to Sydney Shield’s inaugural team) have been long-time Hills players, winning many premierships.

We found that during all our time at the club, the board of management plus all the volunteers had one aim and that was to see any child that wanted to play footy had that opportunity to do so at the club. A lot of the boys that played for the Hills did so all their careers, making it a family club.

We found that a lot of the parents were successful business people who brought their business knowledge to the club and making it the success it is today.

My wife Jennifer (life member in 2005) and I were invited to present to the Sydney

Shield and Ron Massey Cup sides with their football jerseys on game day at Crestwood last year which we thought was a great initiative instigated by the club.

We look forward to when the club is able to complete the works on the clubhouse on top of the canteen and dressing sheds.

We were extremely proud club members, to be a part of the Hills supporters to see the Ron Massey side win the first of their premierships.

We look forward to many more Sunday afternoons sitting on the hill at Crestwood with a beer and catching up with lifelong friends we have made at this great family club.

Our first involvement with the Hills Football club started back in 1990 when we took our eldest son Ryan to the club when he was nine. He has since gone all the way up to A Grade, winning several premierships along the way.

Our youngest son, David, started playing for the club in 1991, although he was only six,

he had two years in the under-sevens and progressed through the years right up to the original Sydney Shield team until injury forced his early retirement. He was also fortunate to win several premierships.

The friendships we have made during those early years at the club still stands today. We found that during all our time at the club was that all the board of management plus all the volunteers had one aim and that was to see any child that wanted to play footy had that opportunity to do so at the club.

A lot of the boys that played for the Hills did so all their careers, making it a family club. We found that a lot of the parents were successful business people who brought their business knowledge to the club, making it the success it is today.

We have seen the club progress with the times with new jersey designs to better fit the image of the club was trying to project in the community. Now my wife Jennifer (awarded

life membership in 2005) and I were invited to present to the Sydney Shield and Ron Massey Cup sides with their football jerseys on game day at Crestwood last year which we thought was a great initiative instigated by the club.

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LAURENCE O'BRIEN

After a few years break coaching at another club, I went to watch my grandson train for the Bulls at Kellyville Park. Matt



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Reardon was running the training session by himself and I asked Matt if he needed a hand and that's where my Bulls' coaching began, coaching my grandson in 2010.

I'm always pleased to watch boys progress from hardly being able to catch and pass to be good players. I still have an interest in Declan Murray who I started coaching in under-6s and is now in the Parramatta representative team.

Other boys I have met in the Bulls Academy training, where I started in 2016, have progressed to Harold Matthews and then SG Ball. I'm pleased to say, they still come and say hello.

I have made a lot of friends over the 14 years - coaches, trainers, managers, parents and most of the boys who through their grounding at the club have grown into fine young men.

The introduction of Oz Tag and touch football, which I played in when John Clifford and Brian Goldwater were referees, has been a great progression for the club.

Although the club has a policy of not turning away players, I feel that sometimes when the teams have too many players, the boys don't get a lot of game time, which upsets both players and parents.

The club does a great job with the mini camp and the Bulls Academy now that it is held at the beginning of the year instead of the end of the year.

LUKE SAMMUT

I first started off at the Hills Bulls back in 2002. I had just finished school at Terra Sancta with a group of boys led by Peter Whalan and Jason Taggart and they were registered to play in the local C-grade under Russ Mooney. I worked at Rosehill races and Russ and the team were out there for a boys day. Pete hit me up and asked me would I come down while Russ was 25-deep, 'emuing' through the bins trying to find extra money so he could kick on to Rydges.



On the Sunday, Hills played at Crestwood in a trial so I rocked up. The boys were getting ready and Russ was in the corner in ‘all sorts’, forgetting who I was, but to his credit he let me be part of the squad. We had two great seasons, unfortunately going down in both grand finals against Cabramatta. After the 2003 season, the boys decided to go their separate ways, starting families or retiring to concentrate on work, but I continued to help out where I could.

In 2005, I teamed up with Peter Heath and Jarod ‘Gur’ Anderson who let me jump on board to help out where I could with C-grade. We had another awesome season and took out the premiership with a 5-4 win over arch rivals Wenty. In 2006 to 2009 I moved up to A-grade where I helped Chris’s father O’Toole and, when he stepped down, teamed up with Gur again but my role went from water boy to team manager where I learnt the ins and out from a legend and life member Jenny Byrne.

Unfortunately, in 2010 the boys went their separate ways and I was left with no team.

But Stuart Rugari had just been given the C-grade second side and he and I formed a great friendship and I asked if he would consider taking me on. To his credit, he said he would have to ask Hilton Byrnes, as he had been his manager in previous years, but Hilton was happy to move aside and be our video man and film our games. It was a dream start but a slight hiccup saw us bought back to reality but to the credit of the players, who loved and respected Stuey, we came back to win the grand final at Marconi.

Late 2011, I was successful in getting a job with Parramatta but could not forget where I came from nor the club that helped me to where I got. Today I’ve still tried to help out where I can, teeing up with Paul Griffin and the under-13s, Mick Withers and C-grade from 2013-17, winning three out of five premierships then helping then helping out Peter Whalan in taking the under-10s to a memorable win.

I have been tied up with some great teams but to win a competition with the man who

helped me get to the club but also your best mate; it’s day you won’t forget. But over all in the last 20 years I have met a lot of friends who have treated me like family. That includes the Griffin, Walpole, Gremmo, Young, Mooney, Mahoney, Byrnes, Grech, Curran families who have helped me along the way and let me be part of this great club. Sorry if I forgot anyone but you are all great people. It was rewarding to also help run Hills’ touch on Thursday, starting at Kellyville and finishing at Crestwood in 2016. They were good times.

MARK DONKIN

I always played for our school team at Marist Brothers Parramatta with a stack of blokes I grew up with. Prior to Hills entering a team in the Parramatta A-grade in 1988, Russell Mooney, Mark Boland and I were approached by Timmy O’Brien, the Hill head coach, and his main sponsor from Family Boats about coming over to share in their dream. We



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always wanted to play A-Grade but not for one of the major clubs that were backed by major licensed clubs. Hills was the perfect fit for a couple of blokes from fibro houses in Toongabbie! The rest is history. The three of us signed up and caused a huge amount of angst amongst our previous club’s execs, including the great Ray ‘Rabbits’ Warren who didn’t miss us with one of his great sprays about loyalty.

We met some of the nicest fellas we’ve ever met including Pancho Ryan, Peter Edwards, Mark Clinton, Paul Mulherin and a host of the Hills hard-heads like Johnny Abbott, Mick Gremmo and Sean Bradwell. A few years later, Hills, coached by the great Allan Cook, entered a team into the inaugural NSWRL Metropolitan Cup (1990) where I was fortunate to lead the side as captain, probably one of my proudest sporting accomplishments. Whilst we were beaten marginally by Ryde Eastwood in the grand final, we were just so proud of our achievements. The three of us laughed at the irony of being beaten in the ‘GF’ by a team

backed by a major Leagues Club! I played A grade for the four at Hills and captained each of the teams I was involved with. I loved it

Hills Bulls have advanced The Hills Bulls have advanced probably as much as the Hills District area has in the past 60 years. I love seeing the black and white photos of the kids in the old Hills jerseys, barely any housing around Crestwood and Jasper and the coaches with massive moustaches chomping on a cigarette.. The Hills is now an eclectic group of residents and so too is the club which is populated by an eclectic group of players and coaches. They’ve done it way tougher than the big clubs backed by licensed establishments and rely on personal investors as it always has. It proves just how many good people there are out there.

In the past decade, the club’s strategy has capitalised on the area’s growth and maximised its recruitment to be a powerhouse of the Parramatta district and NSW Rugby League. Players just don’t appear; it takes hard work by

individuals who tap on doors to recruit more players and coaches. This is as advanced as I’ve ever seen the club. It augers well for their future.

These days I’m happy being a humble spectator at home games with all my old mates who played in the 80s and 90s. It is a highlight of my week to head up to Crestwood, have a couple of beers and catch up with blokes who are the salt of the earth, regardless of their income or intellect. Hills Bulls have left me surrounded by lifelong mates who I stumble across at a huge amount of places like Crestwood or Noosa or Stockland or overseas!

Russell Mooney, Mark Boland, Trevor McCaffery, Shane Ferguson all played together and we remain very close but we became mates with so many fellas. I loved Pancho Ryan, Andrew Goggin, Timmy O’Brien, Allan Cook and Mark Hawley just to name a few. It’s a pretty unique bond if I’m honest. They are mates that are like the stars ... you don’t always see them but you know they are there.

My fondest memories are making it to the Metro Cup grand final and being named in the team of the decade, easily my two career highlights.

The longest lasting impression though is that the club has allowed people from all backgrounds to assimilate by enabling participation in this great game. Regardless of race, colour or ability and now gender, there’s a place for you at Hills.

MATT REARDON

The most significant change to the Bulls was the introduction of Oz Tag. I recall being at a board meeting where I raised the issue that, as this becomes more serious and competitive and becomes bigger than junior rugby league, then we will need to look at the whole purpose of our club.

I also think we should give enormous credit to Rob Zecchin and the quality of care that he has not only provided in first aid but the resultant improvement in the overall

quality of care at Crestwood – whilst I’ve been out of the club day-to-day for a while, there is no doubt that the quality of care at Crestwood is by far the best in the district.

MITCH MAHONEY, PLAYED FROM UNDER-7S TO C-GRADE OVER 13 SEASONS

The Hills District Junior Rugby League Football club has been a significant part of my life for as long as I can remember. The fondest memories of my childhood undoubtedly include the people I’ve met and the experiences I’ve had whilst being a part of this club.

In my first season in 1998, I played with my brother Daniel and Tom Young. My first coaches were my uncle, Paul Griffin and my dad, Mark Mahoney. Due to having my brother



so close in age, I believe I was lucky to be able to have my own group of mates who I played with, along with Daniel’s mates, who I also remain friends with to this day. I was lucky to be around the likes of Ben Mooney, Tom Young, Rhys, Jake and Sean Walpole, Michael Inskip, Luke Keary, Bevan DeVries, Ben Eisenhuth, Todd James, and Joseph Eneliko.

As I progressed through my playing career, it wasn’t until I was around 13 years old that I started to take the game seriously. I had always struggled to have the confidence to put myself out there, but after years of backing up and playing in my brother’s team, I had the guidance and support that I needed.

My experience at the Bull Pit couldn’t have been better. I often reflect on where I am today in my life and genuinely attribute the positive traits that I have to my family and the club that I was a part of during my formative years. Between the game itself, the people at the club, and the general mischief we got up to after the games;

I couldn’t have asked for a better childhood.

I learned that it is seldom the most talented people who succeed but the person who is most committed to the cause. I learned that “if it is going to be, it’s up to me”. On the field, we were never the most talented players but we worked harder than everyone else and we stuck together as a team, leveraging each other’s strengths to benefit the group. I believe that the values that I hold dear to this day, such as loyalty, teamwork, hard work and commitment are due to my time at Crestwood.

We were getting significantly beat week in, week out, but I believe that was a character building experience. After three years of losing, Mark Mahoney sat our team down and said that we would win the premiership within three years. Obviously, none of the team believed him but we sat down as a collective and come up with a list of objectives that would facilitate us meeting our goals.

Whether it was the goal setting, or the near

sadistic Tuesday night training sessions, we won the premiership within three years.

My time at the club also afforded me the opportunity to watch the older guys such as Heath L'Estrange, Jamie Buhner, Blake Green, Patrick Inskip, Jason Baitieri and Robert Young. Watching these guys play had a big impact on me as not only were they excellent players, they always had time for the younger guys such as myself and served as role models without them even knowing it. This is a testament to the culture of the club, where the older, high performing individuals give back to the club and inspire the younger generations. Something that I have tried to replicate in my own life.

ROBERT ZECCHIN
(LIFE MEMBER)

Someone once asked me what is like being part of the Bulls. I said the same as if I asked you what it feels like being part of large, loving

family; that is, being there for the good times as well as a the not so good times. I have been part of the Bulls family since 2004 when both my sons started to play rugby league. I started as a trainer, became a coach, was manager for many years, a board member for over 20 years, the treasurer taking over from late great John Young, a sponsor for the Heart Foundation of Australia, the registrar, a position I hold today and finally the senior first aid officer for the club.

I have seen the great growth and development of this mighty club, as well as in many players, to not only become the biggest club in the Parramatta district but also the best. We have the best supporters not only numerically (see the crowds at Crestwood when Sydney Shield and Ron Massey teams play) but also in their passion. The growth I have seen relating to the introduction of Oz Tag to club, the introduction of girl's rugby league (inaugural premiers) and in League Tag, an A-grade women's side in 2023 and now the near commencement of the new clubhouse and gym shows not only

vision and commitment by the Bulls' board but by many individuals who put the club first.

My best and/or proudest moments in my history with the club are the following:

1. Watching my son Ryan win the C1 premiership in 2017,
2. Watching the Ron Massey side win the grand final in 2022,
3. Introducing electronic banking and budgets in my role as treasurer,
4. Making Crestwood a safe and enjoyable place for kids to play,
5. Having a vision of gutters and seeing it happen,
6. Introducing Automatic Electronic Defibrillators (AED) to the club
7. Accepting my life member jacket in 2019, and
8. Getting so many lifelong friends along the way in the best rugby league club in the world!

Go the mighty Bulls!



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RUSSELL MOONEY,
SENIOR PLAYER AND
LONG-TIME COACH

I joined Hills Bulls as a player in 1987 to be part of a developing A grade team. We were the only club that joined the Metropolitan Cup without the backing of a leagues club and other clubs thought we would never survive. We surprised everyone, making the inaugural Metro Cup grand final and lost to a team that had many former first grade players as well as two New Zealand internationals. I truly think Hills thrived on being the underdog club and made sure their focus was on developing all types of players and really focused on all our younger teams.

I came to the Bulls with my best mates Mark Donkin and Mark Boland and over a five-year period we were joined by many other lifelong friends like Trevor McCaffery, Shane Ferguson, Luke Thomas and Andrew Mitchell while I made many new lifelong mates.

Still not having the backing on a Leagues club, in the past decade Hills Bulls have still been able to thrive in the Ron Massey Cup and Sydney Shield while still not losing focus of all players whether they play division one or four.

Once you play for Hills, you join the Bulls community for life. Regardless of ability there is a place for you to play football. I feel Hills encourage players of all abilities to play and no person is greater than the club.

Being named in the Hills team of the half-century is the biggest honour I have received and made me one proud Bull. While my fondest memory is being a coach and helping players improved. I was told in my early days of coaching that there is a spot here for every player and I enjoyed trying to make every player better regardless of their ability.

**SAM RUTHERFORD,
COACH OF UNDER-
6S FOR THREE
YEARS, MEMBER
OF THE COACHING
AND DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE AND
PARAMATTA JUNIOR
COACH OF THE
YEAR IN 2022**

Our family got involved with the Bulls in 2021 when my oldest son could play in the under-6s as a five year old. We live close to Baulkham Hills and we believed The Hills Bulls was the club for us. I have only been involved in the club for a short period but can see that the club is a family friendly club. They are happy to move with the times and support programs such as try time and the tackle ready program.

The club provides a safe and caring environment for young rugby league players to develop their skills. In 2021 it promoted mental health by holding a mental health round supporting Longhorn, the club’s community support program. The club also promotes organ donation through its involvement with Jersey Day each year.

The club and members of the committee are approachable. The coaching and development committee provides support to coaching staff.

The Tackle Ready Program was only new in 2022 and faced a lot of objections (including from myself), however, I think if done correctly, it can be a valuable program. A good analogy is that you don’t place your child in a pool for the first time and tell them to swim to the other side as they can’t, you have to teach them how to swim. This is the same for tackling. The program takes the kids right back to the basics to learn how to fall safely. The program then goes through a series of drills

to teach kids the safe way of tackling, running into a tackle, and protecting themselves.

My fondest moment at Hills was being nominated by the committee for junior coach of the year. This shows the respect that they have in me as a coach and person.

MARK HARVEY

The club has developed, adapting to today’s needs without losing our founding members’ vision for football and family in the district. It is a major leader in the district with development of girls and boys on and off the field.

I commenced at the Bulls as a four-year-old ball boy. I played my first game at six and remained active in the club for over 30 years, playing (300+ games), training teams, coaching teams, coaching member of the Bulls’ academy, volunteering in the canteen as a kid, referee hills touch and coaching hills Oz Tag teams.

The Bulls ensured while growing up that my



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family was together doing things they loved. My mother played a big role in the canteen and my brother played and coached at the club for many years. I brought my son down to Hills because of my experiences and he played over 100 games for the club before he moved away from the Bulls due to a number of factors.

The Bulls bring the feeling of family to its members, and it ensures that players get to play in a safe respectable environment whilst the club develops these children into decent contributors to society. My experience at the club was one of family, brotherhood and an environment of safety. Every family took care of each other and ensured all kids remained safe and playing.

I have some great memories having played for so long - from the premiership winning C-grade, coached by Billo, that required us winning nine in a row, to winning the A-grade and A-reserve under coach Dave Brooks. I had a number of mates from the L'Estrange

boys, the Abbotts, the Gremmos to name a few. We are all still friends and I know if they or I ever needed a hand with anything, they would be there to support and assist.

The early years Peter Heath was a great influence he taught us about toughness and never backing down. John Billings and Keith Churchland played major develop roles in my life they were outstanding in the way they developed kids. Other mentions are most of the dads in my era - Alan Cook, Mr Gremmo, Barry Rudd, Barry L'Estrange, all real men with different outlooks but the same goals.

I loved every moment being part of the Bulls. It was my life and my passion. The Bull Pit shaped me to what I am today. I would love to have continued to coach at the club and remain active but circumstances around that didn’t eventuate and I started to refereeing to give back to the district in which I have been a member for 40 years.

My fondest memory was being able to play

TESTIMONIALS



my 100, 200 and 300 at Crestwood oval and simply being at the oval most Saturdays and Sundays, surrounded by mates wearing the Bulls' colours and wanting to be like our Metro Cup stars at the time. I wouldn't change a thing.

MARK MAHONEY

So it all began about 30 years ago when, through my brother-in-law, I was discussing where our boys, Daniel and Mitchell, might play some rugby league. We were at a family barbeque from memory and 'Griffo' planted the seed about taking the boys down to have a run around at Hills for their first rugby league experience, Griffo coached the boys during their first year as well as at other stages of their careers at Hills as well.

As they say, it was all over after the boys' first game; they absolutely loved it and both have played well over 200 games before rep footy and life got in the way, running around with

lifelong mates on the footy field both of my sons have lifelong mates who are still in each other's lives and their own families' lives which is what it is all about for me and our family. We love nothing more than being invited to birthdays, marriages and life-forming events with all of the boys and families that we call our friends today.

When I ask the boys why they love Hills so much, they always say the same things: it was our mates and playing footy with them every week, the lessons that they learned that holds them in good stead for adulthood and life - such as loyalty, mateship, learning and just having a go in life no matter how hard it gets . This is what a team environment can teach you and how to best learn those lessons for the future which is what sport and Hills is so very good at.

The people that my sons, myself and my whole family have met and become lifelong friends with is just an awesome example of what a great culture and good people there at the club; there for the right reasons. Our club is renowned for

being a family club and after some 30 years at Hills Bulls in various roles such as president, treasurer, coach, trainer, manager, sponsor and general hand, I feel like I am in a position to pass an opinion with some certainty on the matter.

I love nothing more than being involved for the members of our great club, the teams and the players as this is what it is all about. Community sport is about giving back to anyone who would like a game of rugby league, the best game of them all, no matter what level or skill set the individual has. It warms my heart to see all the kids on a Saturday morning running around playing footy with massive smiles on their faces and recounting their on-field heroics on the fields and then going to their footy mate's home for the afternoon to continue the fun and maybe even the odd sleep over or two.

Hills is a huge club with so many moving parts to it just to make it function. We do not have a leagues club that can assist us with funding, so we rely on very generous sponsors that put



their hands in their pockets every year. Some of them put large sums of money and their personal time every year with no expectation to square the ledger. I will not embarrass them but they know who they are, current sponsors as well as the past sponsors. Thank you for your continued support and loyalty. The other priority fund generators has been touch footy and more lately it is Oz Tag. Many people have had a vision for these two sports and they have both added lots of value to our club. So thank you all of the Hills legends who had the vision as well as the motivation to grow the idea into a concept that assists the club still today.

For me personally, being involved in the club has really taught me so many life lessons as well as helped me grow as a business owner and a person that I might be able to help mentor people along the way a little. The life experiences that the club have given me in my personal and business careers are many and it would only bore people but I am truly thankful that I have had the fortunate opportunities that

I have had at the club. I feel like it was meant to be and I am a better person for being involved in this great club. I have some many friends and family in this club and always will have. I simply love the place and the people in it.

Like all good things, it must come to an end at some time and my time is drawing closer to the end than the beginning. After some 30 years, it is time for the mantel to be passed over the next year or so to someone with a new and smarter approach for the club. It is not sad but exciting not just for the club but the new people joining this great adventure. Until you understand what is below the hood of the car (people in the club), you simply cannot understand what the club brings to its members but also the community. It is nothing short of amazing, trust me.

I will finish with this: I had the fortune to asked by one of mates from the footy club if I wanted to help out and assist with coaching with last year's Ron Massey Cup team. Michael Withers is one of those rare coaches that just

understand the game and he reads it better than most. As a coaching team, we have had many successes together, in rep footy as well as at clubland, and to see the faces of the many people who have played a role, not just with last year’s team but over the many years it has taken the club to build a strong senior group that we can all be proud of, was just fantastic.

To see men, women and children with tears of joy streaming down their faces when that full-time whistle went, and the Hills’ Ron Massey 2022 team were the premiers for the first at that level in the club’s long and proud history, is something I will go to the grave with. Those faces of pure joy, excitement and pride are engraved in my memory with what their club had just accomplished. The senior group is so very important to the club and its members. We must have this group so as to give all of our juniors the opportunity to play at all levels and to have a place to call their own and that is what the senior footy group and the club are about.

So, in short, Hills Bulls have given myself and my family as much as we have given to the club and I/we will be forever indebted to the club and the people of Hills Sporting Club forever. Once a Bull always a Bull!

PETER’S LITTLE FOOTY STORY

I joined the club in 1975 as a 4 year old kid. My heroes were the men who played for Hills in the C grade and A grade teams. In the ‘70s Hills played out of Jasper Rd Oval. Their dressing sheds were a sacred place with a big bull painted on the wall. Every now and then they would win and the players would sing. I knew back then that that was something I wanted to do. Through the years I played in some good teams with some early success. By the time I got to C grade I was fit and strong and loving my footy. I played with some good players and had some very good coaches, even being lucky enough to

represent Parramatta in the Jersey Flegg competition for a couple of years. Five years in the Metro cup was a lot of fun, senior footy was everything I dreamed of as a kid; very tough, very hard, playing against players straight out of grade nationals, even internationals.

Through Mark Donkin, I got involved in the Parramatta junior development squads where I worked as a couch for 8 years. This was also a lot of fun, meeting kids from all over the district. Many of them went on to grade at Parramatta. I took to coaching at Hills at around the same time, meeting a whole new heard of young bulls. Some of them I’m proud to say are still my friends today.

Captain coach of reggies was a pretty hard job, but I had great support from my old mate Gur, who I’d met in the under sixes many years before. In 2001 we won all three grades, something that had never been done before or since. Brookesy is a legend bloke and a great coach, who led the club well. I took over as A grade coach after him, but unfortunately



couldn’t reach the same heights. Players retired, people moved on, new blood was needed.

I went back to coaching C grade, probably the best grade to coach. They aren’t little kids anymore, and still roar enough to coach if they are prepared to listen. Working with Gur once again and winning another C grade premiership for the club five to four over Wenty was a great achievement and cause for wonderful celebrations. Footy is a funny game sometimes, so to lose an A grade grand final to the same club with a lot of the same blokes was truly heart breaking.

A chance to work with my old team mate Griffo in both junior and senior footy was another great period at the club. If you know Paul Griffin, you will know plenty of hard work will be followed by plenty of fun times. GRIFFO LEGEND!

Over all those years I’ve made some wonderful friends and had the time of my life, living out my little footy dream at the Bulls. From a little ball boy to A grade coach, it was

truly an awesome ride. Looking back now I competed in 37 seasons over 42 years. I was lucky enough to win 9 premierships for the club, but lost more grand finals than I won- you don’t count the ones you lose.

To all my team mates, and players I coached, I thank you for the time and effort put in at training and in the games. Special thanks must go to Carolyn Smaile and her team of physios for keeping not only myself, but all the Bulls on the paddock. Hilton and Jenny Byrne, the best manager and video man the club has had in my humble opinion.

From a four year old kid dreaming of one day playing senior footy for the Bulls to metro cup grand finals and coaching senior footy myself, I feel lucky and privileged to have been part of our wonderful club.

ARE WE GOOD?
ARE WE GOOD?

Cheers, Heathy.

**KHALIL KOUAYDER
- PRAISE FOR
THE CLUB**

My name is Khalil Kouayder I am the club secretary of the Greenacre Tigers JRLFC. Since our competitions have merged I have noticed Hills Bulls have a really good set up, and in my opinion are the benchmark for us junior rugby league football clubs.

I believe they are really organised, strong, competitive teams across all age groups, 13+ of course, not sure about their junior teams. Also, their officials conduct themselves in a professional manner.

For myself and the club to grow, I would love to meet with them and pick their brains on some of their systems, to hopefully adopt them and implement them within our club.

If you can make this happen I would really appreciate it.

Thank you,

Khalil Kouayder
Secretary, Greenacre Tigers JRLFC



CLUB IMMORTALS & LEGENDS

CLUB IMMORTALS
300 GAMES OR MORE

- Craig Mulligan
- Darryl Abbott
- Martin Shanahan
- Peter Heath
- Chris Pearce
- Mark Harvey
- Robert Young
- Sean Walpole

CLUB LEGENDS
200 GAMES OR MORE

- | | |
|-------------------|-----|
| Thomas Young | 277 |
| Jayden Griffin | 266 |
| Ben Mooney | 261 |
| David Byrne | 260 |
| Isaac Gorman | 255 |
| Bailey Don | 253 |
| Nicholas Holliday | 237 |
| Patrick Lee | 237 |
| Mark Stewart | 229 |
| Brad Price | 229 |
| Heath L'Estrange | 228 |
| Daniel Parsons | 222 |
| Jackson Sharp | 219 |
| Rhys Walpole | 213 |
| Daniel Mahoney | 213 |
| Reece Watson | 211 |
| Joshua Palin | 207 |
| Mitchell Mahoney | 206 |
| Jack Holliday | 201 |
| Phil Wolffe | 201 |
| Jake Brennan | 200 |



PERPETUAL AWARDS

MICHAEL GREEN

In the years since his passing, I have seen plenty of young, talented footballers come through the ranks. I always compare them to Michael Green in physical presence, skill, mental toughness / the desire to win at all costs, and above all, their contribution to a team as a “good bloke”. Lots of NRL players have some of these characteristics but the champions have them all. Greenie was a champion.

– Scott Wisemantel

MICHAEL GREEN AWARD
BEST MINI LEAGUE PLAYER OF THE YEAR (U6-U9)

2023	Hudson Tait
2022	Joshua Cochrane
2021	Tyler Rizzo
2020	Max Hayne
2019	Ryan Lindsay
2018	Riley Brown
2017	Samuel Polley
2016	Aiden Crowley
2015	Darcy Feltham
2014	Hayden Brown
2013	Jesse Featherstone
2012	Ethan Saunders
2011	Nicholas Lenaz
2010	Sam Loizou

2009	Nicholas Zakhia
2008	Coby Thomas
2007	Brock Pillegra
2004	Damon Meaney
2003	Brent Whicker
2002	Jackson Bricknell
2001	Jake Walpole
2000	Michael Wynn
1999	Daniel Mahoney
1998	Heath Watson
1997	Danielle Sullivan
1996	Tim Jenkins
1995	Jarred Farlow
1994	Matthew Desira
1993	Robert Young
1992	Chase Watson

MICHAEL GREEN AWARD
BEST MOD LEAGUE PLAYER OF THE YEAR (U10-U12)

2023	Cooper Crinion
2022	Matthew Axiak
2021	Tyson Puleitu
2020	Riley Davis
2019	Jack Orley
2018	Darcey Feltham
2017	Luke Simpson
2016	Ethan Sanders
2015	Maximus Tupou
2014	Reilly Canning

2013	Tyler Field
2012	Callum Rennie
2011	Shannon Gardiner
2010	Michael Tupou
2009	Amaziah Slavin
2008	Troy Black
2007	Lachlyn Mulford
2006	Zac O’Keefe
2005	Aaron Apikotoa
2004	Matt Lyons
2004	Jake Walpole
2003	Krys Freeman
2003	Ryan Grearing
2002	Daniel Mahoney
2001	Thomas Young
2000	Paul Cividon
1998	Blake Green
1997	Heath L’ Estrange
1996	Reece Watson
1995	Rhian Gerard
1994	Daniel Irvine
1993	Christian Toro
1992	Joel Bond
1991	Wade L’Estrange
1990	Daniel Zubrycki
1989	Adam Toro
1988	Heath Churchland



PERPETUAL AWARDS

MARJ RADFORD AWARD
INTERNATIONAL PLAYER OF THE YEAR
(U13–U15)

2023	Talen Risati
2022	Talen Risati
2021	Brady Moynihan
2020	Talia Manassa
2019	Domenico De Stradis
2018	Hayden Orley
2017	Maximus Tupou
2016	Tyler Field
2015	Jayden Tanner
2014	Shannon Gardiner
2013	Joel Bradford
2012	Jake Brennan
2011	Scott Hogan
2010	Will Reardon
2009	Kelly Benson
2008	Dominic Field
2007	Pauli Pauli
2006	Gavan Bright
2005	Michael Inskip
2004	Jamie Buhrer
2003	Jason Baiteri
2002	Jack Jurd
2001	Robert Young
2000	Michael Johnson
1999	Patrick Inskip

1998	Stephen Boorer
1997	Todd Smith
1996	Sean L'Estrange
1995	Daniel Irvine
1994	Wade L'Estrange
1993	Keith Churchland
1993	Wade L'Estrange
1992	Ryan L'Estrange
1991	Matthew O'Rielly

WARREN HEATH SHIELD
INTERNATIONAL PLAYER
OF THE YEAR (U16 TO C GRADE)

2022	Declan Murray
2021	Ethan Sanders
2020	Myles Martin
2019	Jordan Puleitu
2018	David Hollis
2017	Tyler Field
2016	Dylan Clifford
2015	William Ryan
2014	Jonathon Mose
2013	Sean Walpole
2012	Kelly Benson
2011	Aaron Weston
2010	David Ricketts
2009	Sam Kleinhams
2008	Mitchell Davidson

2007	Matt Davidson
2006	Brad Horder
2005	Matt Saunders
2004	Jack Jurd
2003	David Williams
2002	Heath L'Estrange
2001	John Williams
2000	Ryan Steel
1999	Sean L'Estrange
1998	Daniel Irvine
1997	Wade L'Estrange
1996	Nathan Clarke
1995	Ryan L'Estrange
1994	Martin Shanahan
1994	Ryan L'Estrange
1993	Peter Foulstone
1992	Matthew O'Rielly
1991	Kurt Chapman
1990	Martin Seal
1989	Matt Tyquin
1988	Anthony Toro
1987	Scott Mahon
1986	Scott Wisemantle
1985	Cameron McInnes
1984	Scott Wood
1983	Wayne Schwerekle
1982	David Said

FOREST PRESENTATION
(McDONALD) SHIELD
TEAM OF THE YEAR

2023	U14 Girls Gold Tackle
2023	Sydney Shield
2022	Ron Massey Cup Team
2021	Not awarded due to COVID
2020	U15 Girls LeagueTag
2019	U18/2 - Div 2
2018	U10/1
2017	C Grade Div 1
2017	Under 13/1 Div 1
2016	U15 Girls
2015	Sydney Shield
2014	C Grade Div 1
2013	Sydney Shield
2012	U11/4
2011	U12/2
2010	U9/1
2009	U17/2
2008	U16/1
2007	C Grade
2006	U13/2
2005	U14/1
2004	U11/1

PAUL GRIFFIN SHIELD
SENIOR CLUB PERSON OF THE YEAR

2023	Jayden Griffin
2022	Ian Boardman

JENNY BYRNE SHIELD
FEMALE PLAYER OF THE YEAR

2023	Temieke Withers
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CLUB PRESIDENTS AWARD
OUTSTANDING EFFORT

2023	Trent Townsend
2023	Tracey Marshall
2022	Hannah Withers
2021	Billie Gwynne
2020	Kaylah Pollard

COL SUTTON AWARD
JUNIOR CLUBMAN OF THE YEAR (U12–U18)

2023	Eddie Gonzalez
2022	Jack Orley
2021	Not awarded due to COVID
2020	Brady Moynihan
2019	Shaun Thompson
2018	Brayden Marshall
2017	Brayden Marshall
2016	Jayden Griffin
2016	Patrick Lee
2015	Flynn Mooney
2015	Jackson Sharp
2014	Josh Palin
2013	Brendan Starr
2012	Nick Holliday
2011	Zac O'Keefe
2010	Kelly Benson
2009	Michael Inskip
2008	Ryan Ferguson
2007	Sam Gorman
2006	Mitchell Mahoney
2005	Alex Turner
2004	Jason Baitieri

PERPETUAL AWARDS

COACH OF THE YEAR

2023	Daniel Lewis
2023	Craig Culnane
2022	Michael Withers
2021	Not awarded due to COVID
2020	Simon Gwynne
2019	Isaac Gorman
2018	Vanessa Beck
2017	Matt Rennie
2016	Laurie O'Brien
2015	Michael Withers
2014	Leon Carroll
2013	Justin Moynihan
2012	Gavin Field
2011	Paul Griffin
2010	Steve Wilde
2009	Stuart Ruggari

HILLS BULLS
COMMUNITY SPIRIT AWARD

2023	Sam Rutherford
2023	Scott Chalcraft
2022	Aimee Gonzalez
2022	David Gremmo
2021	Not awarded due to COVID
2020	Laurie O'Brien
2019	Rob Gleeson
2018	Arron Gonzalez
2017	The Marshall Family

HIGHEST POINT SCORER

(INTERNATIONAL) U13-U18 & Seniors

2023	Brad Keighran (Ron Massey Cup)
2023	Bradley Avery (Sydney Shield)
2023	Lachlan Thomson (Mens Open)
2023	Losena Maylin Qiolevu (Womens Open)
2023	Jordyn White (U16 Girls LeagueTag)
2023	Leah Parnell (U14 Girls Tackle)
2022	Brad Keighran (Ron Massey Cup)
2022	Mitchell Hyde (Sydney Shield)
2022	Connor Thomson (A Grade)
2022	Leah Parnell (LeagueTag)
2022	Talen Risati (Tackle)
2021	Not awarded due to COVID
2020	Lewis Duncombe (Jnrs)
2020	Mitch Hyde (Sydney Shield)
2019	Talia Manassa (Jnrs)
2019	Mitch Hyde (Ron Massey Cup)
2018	Edmond Matta
2017	Tyler Field
2016	Jack Griffin
2016	Emily Mooney
2015	Joshua Palin
2014	Shannon Gardiner
2013	Ben Cloughton
2012	Jorden Shelley
2009	Joel Caporale
2008	Joel Caporale
2007	Simon Hancock
2006	Eric Pickford

HIGHEST TRY SCORER

(INTERNATIONAL) U13-U18 & Seniors

2023	Logan Aldridge (Ron Massey Cup)
2023	Joseph Jaber (Sydney Shield)
2023	Lachlan Thomson (Mens Open (A Grade)
2023	Losena Maylin Qiolevu (Women Opens)
2023	Jayanna Andary (U16 Girls LeagueTag)
2023	Amelia De Carlo (U16 Girls LeagueTag)
2023	Taylan Koroglu (U13/3)
2022	Maile Li (Ron Massey Cup)
2022	Thomas Menzies (Sydney Shield)
2022	Connor Thomson (A Grade)
2022	Taylah Barr (LeagueTag)
2022	Andrew Qummou (Tackle)
2021	Not awarded due to COVID
2020	Brianna Rich (Jnrs)
2020	Daylen Meredith (Sydney Shield)
2019	Lachlan Vale (Jnrs)
2019	Christopher McCoy (Ron Massey Cup)
2018	Patrick Spence
2017	Cody Jordan
2016	Nicholas Jooste
2016	Emily Mooney
2015	Ahmad Petr
2014	Shannon Gardiner
2013	James Portelli
2011	Ethan Bostock
2009	David Stratford
2008	Matthew Goldsworth
2007	Eric Pickford
2006	Matthew Ferguson

HIGHEST POINT SCORER

(MINI) U6-U7 & U8-U9

2023	Alfie Irvine (U7/1)
2023	Joshua Cochrane (U9/2)
2022	Alfie Irvine (U6/U7)
2022	Zac Zahra (U8/U9)
2021	Not awarded due to COVID
2020	William Marley-Wallace (U6/U7)
2020	Max Hayne (U8/U9)
2019	Beau Murrow (U6/U7)
2019	Max Hayne (U8/U9)
2018	Jake Franklin (U6/U7)
2018	Andy Riot (U6/U7)
2018	Riley Payne (U8/U9)
2017	Thomas Jackson (U6/U7)
2017	Regan Lake (U8/U9)
2016	Lucas Comer (U6/U7)
2016	Tyson Newby (U8/U9)
2015	Cooper Matia
2014	Darcy Feltham
2013	Lachlan Knesevic
2012	Nathan Jackson
2011	William Cushion
2010	Sam Loizou
2009	Nicholas Zakhia
2008	Nicholas Zakhia
2007	Coby Thomas

HIGHEST POINT SCORER

(MOD) U10-U12

2023	Cooper Shaw (U11/3)
2023	Leila Jones (U12/1 Girls LeagueTag)
2022	Yianni Lewis (Tackle)
2022	Keira Withers (LeagueTag)
2021	Not awarded due to COVID
2020	Taylah Barr
2019	Harry Burgess
2018	Harry Burgess
2017	Tyson Newby
2016	Tevita Voitaki
2015	Omar Nouredidine
2014	Alexander Tziogas
2013	William Penisini
2012	Nicholas Zakia
2011	Ben Fenton
2010	Nicholas Zakia
2009	Connor Graves
2008	Connor Graves
2007	Lachlyn Mulford



PERPETUAL AWARDS

BA MULLANE TROPHY
SENIOR CLUB CHAMPION

1968	Ricky Rundel
1969	Bob Collins
1970	John Kolc
1971	John Kolc
1972	Ray Millers
1973	Les Grant
1974	Jim Stewart
1975	Les Ivers
1976	Dave Brown
1977	Don Hallidays
1978	Rob George
1979	Dave Wallace
1980	Peter Cook
1981	Allan Barker
1982	Steve Perks
1983	Michael Wood
1984	Martin Barnes
1985	D Burgmann
1986	Pancho Ryan
1987	Mark Clinton
1988	Greg Harris
1989	Mark Donkin
1990	Paul Mulherin
1991	Simon Howse
1992	Matt Harris
1993	Arthur Pappas
1994	Andrew Mitchell
1995	Greg Leyshon

1996	Chris Pierce
1997	Chris Pierce
1998	Jason Young
1999	Ryan Steel
2000	Mark Trugget
2001	Selwyn Brown
2002	Darrell Abbott
2003	Martin Shanahan
2004	Martin Shanahan
2005	Robert Young
2006	Brad Price
2007	Ace Puleitu
2008	Tim Curley
2009	Robert Young
2010	John Batalibasi
2011	Paul Horan
2012	Ellis James
2013	Ellis James
2014	Mick Hawkings
2015	Daniel Mahoney
2016	Adam Spicer
2017	Heith L'Estrange
2018	Tim Robinson
2019	Daniel Harrison
2020	Taniela Lasalo
2021	Not awarded due to COVID
2022	Brad Keighran
2023	Brad Keighran



PERPETUAL AWARDS

NSW & AUSTRALIA JUNIOR REPS

1986

Scott Wisemantel	NSW CCC Under 15's
Michael Green	NSW CCC Under 15's

1987

Scott Wisemantel	NSW Under 16's
Michael Green	NSW Under 16's
Matthew Conroy	NSW Under 16's
Scott Bradstock	NSW Combined High School

1988

Scott Wisemantel	NSW Under 15's
Grant Lonergan	NSW Under 15's
Scott Wisemantel	NSW CCC Under 17's
Grant Lonergan	NSW Combined High School Under 15's

1990

Kevin Savvas	NSW Combined High School Under 15's
Peter Curran	NSW CCC Under 15's
Chris Shanahan	Australian Tertiary Education team

1991

Kevin Savvas	NSW Combined High School Under 15's
Peter Curran	NSW CCC Under 15's
Chris Shanahan	Australian Tertiary Education team

1997

Sean L'Estrange	NSW Combined Independent School
Ryan Hey	NSW Combined Independent School
Daniel Irvine	NSW CCC
Wade L'Estrange	NSW CCC

1998

Blake Green	NSW Under 12's PSSA
Jarrold Farlow	NSW Under 12's PSSA
Daniel Irvine	NSW CCC
Anthony Boyd	NSW CCC
Daniel Irvine	NSW Under 17's Reps
Anthony Boyd	NSW Under 17's Reps

1999

Matt Davidson	NSW CCC
Mathew Day	NSW CCC
Warren Frome	NSW Combined Independent Schools Under 18's

2001

Scott Heap	NSW Under 16's
Blake Green	NSW Combined High Schools
Nathan Armit	NSW Combined High Schools
Robert Young	NSW Combined Independent Schools

Nathan Armit	Australian School Boys Under 15's
Robert Young	Australian Emerging School boys

2002

Mitchelle Davidson	NSW PSSA Under 11's
Daniel Mahoney	NSW PSSA Under 11's

2004

Jason Baitieri	Australian Under 15's Schoolboys NSW CCC
Dominic Nasso	Australian Under 15's Schoolboys NSW CCC
Tareq Hajjaj	NSW CIS
Michael Inskip	NSW PSSA

2005

Daniel Mahoney	NSW CCC Under 15's
Mitchelle Watson	NSW CCC Under 18's
Harrison Croghan	Aust Affiliated states Under 16's

2006

Daniel Mahoney	NSW CCC U15's
Mitchelle Watson	NSW CIS U18's
Harrison Croghan	Australian Affiliated States Under 16's

Daniel Mahoney	Australian Merit Team Under 16's
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Jason Baitieri	NSW CCC Under 18's
Krys Freeman	NSW CCC Under 15's
Daniel Anissde	NSW CCC Under 15's

2007

Dominic Nasso	NSW CCC Open
Jason Baitieri	NSW CCC Open
Harrison Croghan	NSW CCC Open
Jamie Buhrer	NSW CIS Open
Jason Baitieri	ustralian Schoolboys

2008

Daniel Mahoney	NSW CCC Open
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2010

Matthew Morgan	NSW Under 11's Catholic School
Cooper Edwards	NSW Under 11's Catholic School

Matt Collins	NSW Under 15's CIS
Jack Lord	NSW Under 15's CIS
Adam Spicer	NSW Under 15's CIS
Jessie Hinton	NSW Under 15's CIS
Frank Arcella	NSW Under 15's CIS
Will Ryan	NSW Under 15's CIS

2011

Frank Arcella	NSW Under 15's CIS
Will Ryan	NSW Under 15's CIS

2013

Samuel Loizou	Under 11 PSSA
William Penisini	Under 11 PSSA
Benji Latu	Under 12 PSSA
Tallis Smith	Under 12 PSSA
Matthew Morgan	NSW Under 15 CIS
Brendan Starr	NSW Under 15 CIS

2014

Hayden Orley	Under 11 NSW CPSSC MacKillop
Marley Cassel	Under 11 PSSA
Maximus Tupou	Under 11 PSSA
Josh Curran	NSW Under 15 CCC
Luke Jones	NSW Under 15 CCC
Kyle Cassel	NSW Under 15 CHC
Jayden Griffin	NSW Under 15 CIS
Matthew Morgan	NSW Under 15 CIS
Sam Arcella	NSW Under 15 CIS

2015

Daniel Alauni	Under 11 PSSA
Josh Curran	NSW Under 16 State of Origin Team
Josh Curran (Captain)	Australian Under 16 Australian Indigenous All Stars Team
Josh Curran	Australian Indigenous Young Achievers Team

2016

Savelio Lolesio	Under 12 PSSA
Joseph Jaber	Under 12 PSSA
Daniel Alauni	Under 12 PSSA
Tyler Field	NSW MCS & NSWCCC
Brendan McCreanor	NSW CIS
Tallis Smith	NSW MCS
Callum Rennie	NSW SICC
Cecil Lahood	NSW SICC
Josh Curran	NSW Under 18 State of Origin Team

2017

Jayden Griffin	NSW SICC
Darcy Hardman	NSW SICC
Campbell Byrd	NSW MCS
Jed Edwards	NSW MCS
Tyler Field	NSW MCS
David Hollis	NSW MCS
Jed Edwards	NSW Under 16 State of Origin Team
Tyler Field	NSW Under 16 State of Origin Team
David Hollis	NSW Under 16 State of Origin Team
Sam Hughes	NSW Under 16 State of Origin Team
Josh Curran	NSW Under 16 State of Origin Team

2018

Hayden Orley	NSW CIS
Jacob Chester	West
Mitchell Chester	Sydney West & Presidents
Terrence Patolo	Sydney West
Maximus Tupou	NSW MCS
Marley Cassel	Sydney West & Sydney Gold
Samuel Tuitupou	NSW MCS
Tyler Field	GIO Cup
Brent Barnes	GIO Cup
Jacob Wilkinson	GIO Cup
Tyler Tuigamala	GIO Cup
Samuel Pinomi	NSW Under 16 State of Origin Team

2019

Marbin Wichmann	NSW CHS
Raffaele De Stradis	NSW CIS
Domenico De Stradis	NSW CIS
Patrick Spence	NSW CIS
Declan Murray	NSW CCC
Ethan Sanders	NSW CCC
Joshua Alhazim	NSW CCC
Myles Martin	NSW CCC
David Langi	NSW Under 16 State of Origin Team

2020

None due to COVID-19 Pandemic

2021

None due to COVID-19 Pandemic

2022

Max Hayne	Under 11
Coper Crinion	Under 11 Sydney West
Matthew Axiak	Under 12 Sydney West
Noah Puletua	Under 12 Sydney West
Talen Risati	NSW CIS
Mana Nicholas	NSW CIS
Patrick Spence	NSW CIS
Lucas Harding	NSW CCC

2023

Bernie Irvine	Under 11 Sydney West
Jake McKee	Under 11 MacKillop
Max Hayne	Under 12 Sydney West
Coper Crinion	Under 12 Sydney West
Talen Risati	NSW CIS
Darcy Feltham	NSW CIS

HAROLD MATTHEWS

1985

John Glanville	Parramatta
Jason Lamming	Parramatta
Michael Green	Parramatta
Scott Wisemantel	Parramatta
Anthony Buda	Parramatta

1986

Scott Wisemantel	Parramatta
Michael Green	Parramatta
Anthony Buda	Parramatta
John Glanville	Parramatta
Jason Lamming	Parramatta
Mathew Conroy	Parramatta
Tim Stacey	Parramatta
Shaun Burton	Parramatta

1987

Paul Coinakis	Parramatta
Tim Johnston	Parramatta
Bradley Sullivan	Parramatta

1988

PARRAMATTA PREMIERS

Paul Coinakis (captain)	Parramatta
Daniel Lawrence	Parramatta
Grant Lonergan	Parramatta
Justin Price	Parramatta
Glen Scott	Parramatta

1989

Mark Tyquin	Parramatta
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1990

Darren Alcock	Parramatta
Gavin Cleverly	Parramatta
Adam Williams	Parramatta
Joe Grima	Parramatta
Scott Harris	Parramatta
Peter Loizou	Parramatta
Sandy Epere	Parramatta
Daniel Lawrence	Parramatta

1992

Ryan L'Estrange	Parramatta
Mark Harvey	Parramatta
Adam O'Brien	Parramatta
Luke Garel	Parramatta
Ben Starling	Parramatta
Ben Smith	Parramatta
Trevor Smith	Parramatta
Steven Noble	Parramatta
Adam Toro	Parramatta
Mark Kuseley	Parramatta
Christian Taunton	Parramatta
Nathan Kolc	North Sydney

1993

Ben Starling	Parramatta
Ryan L'Estrange	Parramatta

1996

Etuate Qiokacikaci	Parramatta
Daniel Irvine	Parramatta
Michael Egan Hurst	Parramatta
Luke Taggart	Parramatta

1997

Michael Egan Hurst	Parramatta
Daniel Irvine	Parramatta
Luke Taggart	Parramatta
Marcus Orley	Parramatta

1998

Sean L'Estrange	Parramatta
Awarded player of the year	
David Martinez	
Awarded player of the year	
Ross Giardina	

1999

Nathan McMillan	Parramatta
Nathan Lindner	Parramatta

2000

Heath L'Estrange	Parramatta
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2001

Heath L'Estrange	Parramatta
John Williams	Parramatta
Patrick Inskip	Parramatta

2002

Oliver Saunders	Sydney City
Nathan Armit	Parramatta
Simon Micallef	Parramatta
Blake Green	Parramatta
Patrick Inskip	Parramatta
Mark Murphy	Parramatta
Wayne Boorer	Parramatta
Phillip Wolffe	Parramatta
David Williams	Parramatta

2003

Rowan Hastings	
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2004

Rowan Hastings	Parramatta
Alan Saba	North Sydney
Matthew Saunders	Sydney City

2005

Dom Nasso	Parramatta
Jason Baitieri	Parramatta
Jamie Buhrer	Parramatta
Ben James	Parramatta
Brendan McHugh	Parramatta
Daniel Zisti	St George
Ben Darcy	Sydney City
Rhys Jack	Balmain
Brad Horder	North Sydney
Harrison Croghan	North Sydney
Ray Chiha	North Sydney
Eddie Ziade	North Sydney

2006

Daniel Mahoney	Parramatta
Ellis James	Parramatta

2007

Daniel Mahoney	Parramatta
Keys Freeman	Parramatta
Daniel Annisse	Parramatta
Mitchell Davidson	Parramatta
Shannon King	Parramatta
Tom Kornak	Parramatta
Blake Williams	Parramatta
Gavan Bright	Western Academy
Simon Chiha	Manly Warringah

2008

Luke Fishburn	Parramatta
Trent Jennings	Parramatta
Michael Inskip	Parramatta
Jeff Riley	Parramatta
Ben Saunders	Parramatta
Jason Seage	Parramatta
Pita Wright	Manly Warringah
Jim Bastan	Manly Warringah
Bevan DeVries	North Sydney
Aiden Carney	North Sydney
Shane Brown	North Sydney
Like Keary	North Sydney
Alex Thompson	North Sydney
Mark Murphy	North Sydney
Todd James	North Sydney
Mitchell Mahoney	Western Academy
Jye Gadson	Western Academy
Joseph Eneliko	Western Academy

2009

Pauli Pauli	Western Academy
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2011

Kelly Benson (C)	Western Academy
Adam Spicer	Manly
Jack Lord	Balmain
Alex Maher	North Sydney

2012

Jayden Stokes	Parramatta
Michael Galea	Parramatta
Jordan Shelley	Parramatta
Jake Brennan	Parramatta
Will Reardon	Parramatta
Zac Campton	Parramatta
Niall Walker	Parramatta
Nathan Cooper	Parramatta

2013

Adam Overs	North Sydney
Dakota Cooke-Martin	North Sydney
Jake Brennan	Parramatta
Jayden Stokes	Parramatta
Michael Marcus	Parramatta
Nathan Cooper	Parramatta
Will Reardon	Parramatta
Zac Campton	Parramatta
Rhys Jones	Balmain
Niall Walker	Western Academy
Joel Bradford	Western Academy

2014

Dylan Clifford	Parramatta
Joel Bradford	Parramatta
Josh Curran	Parramatta
Shannon Gardiner	Parramatta
Kyle Cassel	Parramatta
Jaydn Field	Western Academy
Brendan Starr	North Sydney
Ryan Zecchin	North Sydney
Isaac Levave	North Sydney
George Karpathios	North Sydney
Bryson Hunwick	North Sydney
Jake Clisby	North Sydney
Jordan Shelley	North Sydney

2015

Jarrold Spicer	Parramatta
Josh Curran	Parramatta
Kyle Cassel	Parramatta
Jayden Griffin	Balmain
Matthew Morgan	Balmain
Tilli Sikahela	Balmain
Tim Simmons	North Sydney
Luke Jones	Cronulla

HAROLD MATTHEWS

2016

Luke Sommerton	Parramatta
Jayden Tanner	Parramatta
Tyler Field	Parramatta
Campbell Byrd	Western Academy
Jacob Wilkinson	Western Academy
Tallis Smith	Western Academy
John Pangan	North Sydney
Darcy Hardman	North Sydney
Jonathon Derwin	North Sydney
Jordan Eshman	North Sydney
Taj Mickley	North Sydney
Vaughn Edmunds	North Sydney
Franco Paradiso	Cronulla

2017

Braithen Aspin	Parramatta
Jed Edwards	Parramatta
Campbell Byrd	Parramatta
David Hollis	Parramatta
Tyler Field	Parramatta
Josh Gatt	Parramatta
Sam Hughes	Parramatta
Callum Scott	Parramatta
Tallis Smith	Parramatta
Josh Agius	Western Academy
Nick Jooste	Western Academy
Keelin Kronast	Western Academy

2018

Hayden Orley	Parramatta (Train on Squad)
Jordan Puleitu	North Sydney
Louis Reyes	North Sydney
Samuel Pinomi	Manly

2019

Ethan Sanders	Parramatta
Hayden Orley	Parramatta
Kamoe Fekitoa	Parramatta
David Langi	Parramatta
Maximus Tupou	Parramatta
Patrick Spence	Parramatta
Terence Patolo	Parramatta
Myles Martin	Parramatta
Jay Ingleton	Balmain
Savielo Lolesio	Balmain
Jake Murdocca	Balmain
Elijah Sarkis	Balmain
Christian Abel	North Sydney
Mitchell Chester	St George
Nathaniel Cowan	St George

2020

Joshua Alhazim	Parramatta
Dominic De Stradis	Parramatta
Rafaele De Stradis	Parramatta
Myles Martin	Parramatta
Declan Murray	Parramatta
Ethan Sanders	Parramatta
Cooper Sinclair	Parramatta
Patrick Spence	Parramatta

2021

Joshua Alhazim	Parramatta
Dominic De Stradis	Parramatta
Rafaele De Stradis	Parramatta
Myles Martin	Parramatta
Declan Murray	Parramatta
Ethan Sanders	Parramatta
Cooper Sinclair	Parramatta
Patrick Spence	Parramatta

2023

Jordan Uta	Parramatta
Garylee-James Tohovaka	Cronulla

RON MASSEY CUP REPS

NSWRL STATE OF ORIGIN TEAM

2016

Gerard McCullum

2017

Tom Young
Chad O'Donnell
Jamel Hunt
Clayton Williams

2018

Tim Robinson (Captain)

NSWRL PIONEERS TEAM

2018

Tim Robinson (Captain)



SG BALL

1979

John Clapham
Michael Milson

1985

Dean Lonergan Parramatta
Andrew McCaffery Parramatta
Cameron McInnes Parramatta

Awarded best and fairest Parramatta junior player

Scott Marsh
Jim Hartog

1987

Michael Green Parramatta
Scott Wisemantel Parramatta
Scott Mahon Parramatta
Matthew Conroy Parramatta

1988

WON COMPETITION

Scott Wisemantel Parramatta

Awarded the inaugural Michael Green Memorial trophy for the best and fairest player in the SG Ball Competition

John Glanville Parramatta

1989

Paul Coinakis Parramatta
Martin Seal Parramatta
Tim Johnston Parramatta
Michael Steele Parramatta

1990

Kevin Savvas
Anthony Toro' Parramatta
Ian Burge
Peter Curran

Adam Potuzanski

Paul Harvey Parramatta

Guy Newton

1992

Kurt Chapman Parramatta
Justin Russell Parramatta
Ian Burg Parramatta
Peter Curran Parramatta
Richard Butterworth Parramatta
Wade Horder North Sydney
Peter Kuseley North Sydney
David Heath Penrith
Paul Harvey Penrith
Scott Isacs Wests
Chris Langlands Wests

1993

Matthew O'Rielly
Wayne Blazey
Jason Russell
1996
Scott Sullivan Parramatta
Wade L'Estrange Parramatta

1997

Scott Sullivan Parramatta
Wade L'Estrange Parramatta
Daniel Roddy

1998

Daniel Irvine Parramatta
Luke Taggart Parramatta
Michael Egan-hurst
Dane Gilmour
Anthony Boyd

1999

Sean L'Estrange Parramatta
David Martinez
Daniel Irvine Parramatta
Ryan Tramonte
Ross Giardina

2000

Sean L'Estrange Parramatta
Nathan McMillan

2001

Nathan Lindner
Nathan McMillan

2002

Heath L'Estrange Parramatta
John Williams Parramatta
Brett Laws Parramatta

2003

Mitch Krahe North Sydney
Michael Mansour North Sydney
Mitch Erickson North Sydney
Anthony Harris North Sydney
Mark Murphy Parramatta
Simon Micallef Parramatta
Ryan Constable Parramatta
David Williams Parramatta
Oliver Saunders Sydney City

2004

David Williams Parramatta
Patrick Inskip Parramatta
Ryan Constable Parramatta
Mark Murphy Parramatta

Simon Micallef Parramatta
Nathan Armit Parramatta
Mitchell Krahe North Sydney
Mitchell Erickson North Sydney
Jesse Lloyd North Sydney
Robert Suple North Sydney
Josh Bowock North Sydney
Xavier Jordan North Sydney
Reece Watson North Sydney
Paul Horan North Sydney
Michael Mansour North Sydney
Anthony Harris North Sydney
Robert Williams North Sydney
Oliver Saunders Sydney Roosters

2005

Stephen Moses Parramatta
Alan Saba North Sydney
Steve Subakti North Sydney
Matt Tierney North Sydney
Matthew Saunders Sydney Roosters

2006

Dom Nasso Parramatta
Jason Baitieri Parramatta
Louis Yenz Parramatta
Nathan Tannous Parramatta
Matthew Saunders Sydney Roosters
Shane Arundel Manly

2007

Dom Nasso Parramatta
Jason Baitieri Parramatta
Jamie Buhrer Parramatta
Sandor Earl Sydney Roosters
Ben James Western Academy
Chad Chllita Western Academy
Brad Horder North Sydney

2008

Krys Freeman Parramatta
Daniel Mahoney Western Academy
Blake Williams Western Academy
TJ Taotua Western Academy

2009

Trent Jennings Western Academy
Michael Inskip Western Academy
Luke Fishburn Western Academy
Jeff Riley Western Academy
Thomas Young Western Academy
Daniel Anise Balmain
Daniel Mahoney Balmain
Troy Vanderlight Balmain
Blake Williams Balmain
Joseph Eneliko Manly
Luke Keary Manly
Shane Brown North Sydney
Aiden Carney North Sydney
Bevan DeVries North Sydney
Michael Esber Newtown

2010

Luke Fishburn Parramatta
Michael Inskip Parramatta
Mitchell Mahoney Parramatta
Louis Musson Western Academy

2011

John Falou Parramatta
Pauli Pauli Parramatta
Henry Taefu Parramatta
Jake Fuller Parramatta
Louis Musson Parramatta

2012

Nathan George Parramatta
Paula Hafoka Parramatta

2013

Jarryd Moffet North Sydney
Kelly Benson (Captain) North Sydney
Ofa Siale North Sydney
Brendon Raeli Parramatta
Jack Anderson Parramatta
Lachlan Roe Parramatta
Paula Hafoka Parramatta
Adam Spicer Balmain
Jesse Hinton Balmain
Tyler Cassel Balmain
Sean Walpole Western Sydney Academy
Academy

2014

Lliesa Lewadromodromo North Sydney
Sean Walpole Parramatta
Jonathan Mose Parramatta
Niall Walker Balmain
Scott Hogan Balmain
Rhys Sciglitano Western Sydney Academy
Frankie Arcella WA Pirates
Zac O'Keefe WA Pirates

2015

Lachlyn Mulford North Sydney
Jake Brennon Parramatta
Niall Walker Balmain
Troy Black Western Sydney Academy
Rhys Sciglitano Western Sydney Academy
Dylan Clifford Western Sydney Academy

SG BALL

2016

Josh Curran	Parramatta
John Hannawe	Balmain
Dylan Clifford	St George
Joel Bradford	St George
Jaydn Field	St George

2017

Jarrold Spicer	Parramatta
Jye Clisby	Western Sydney Academy
Jayden Griffin	North Sydney
Matthew Hammond	North Sydney
Darcy Hardman	North Sydney
Dean Kammel	North Sydney
Tim Simmons	North Sydney
Alex Laboulet	St George
Shannon Gardiner	Roosters

2018

Tyler Field	Parramatta
Samuel Hughes	Parramatta
David Hollis	Parramatta
Joseph Small	Parramatta
Lorenzo Pritchard	Parramatta
Lachlan Owen	Parramatta
Manaki Poko	Parramatta
Brent Barnes	Parramatta
Campbell Byrd	Parramatta (Train on Squad)
Braith Vaughan-Aspin	Parramatta (Train on Squad)
Callum Scott	Parramatta (Train on Squad)
Darcy Hardman	North Sydney
John Pangan	North Sydney
Lennox Whittaker	North Sydney
Franco Paradiso	North Sydney
Nick Tilburg	Canberra

2021

Nicholas Lenaz	Parramatta
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2022

Joshua Alhazim	Parramatta
Matthew Alhazim	Parramatta
Dominic De Stradis	Parramatta
Rafaele De Stradis	Parramatta
Nicholas Lenaz	Parramatta
Declan Murray	Parramatta
Ethan Sanders	Parramatta
Patrick Spence	Parramatta

2023

Patrick Spence	Parramatta
Declan Murray	Parramatta
Ethan Sanders	Parramatta
Rafaele De Stradis	Parramatta
Dominic De Stradis	Parramatta
Riley Canning	Parramatta
Brad Avery	North Sydney
Matt Newlyn	North Sydney
Joseph Jaber	North Sydney
Nash Hillier	North Sydney



JERSEY FLEGG

1979		
Tony Gavan	Parramatta	
Bill Karydis	Parramatta	
Wayne Morrow	Parramatta	
Steve Young	Parramatta	
1985		
Mark Townsend	Parramatta	
1986		
Simon Bradstock	Parramatta	
1987		
Simon Bradstock	Parramatta	
Paul James	Parramatta	
Andrew McCaffery	Parramatta	
Bill Dowers	Parramatta	
Allan Cook	Parramatta	
Jersey Flegg Coach		
1988		
Matthew Tyquin	Parramatta	
Andrew McCaffery	Parramatta	
Matthew Smith	Parramatta	
Dean Loneragan	Parramatta	
Scott Hodson	Parramatta	
Peter Heath	Parramatta	
Andrew Tymmons	Parramatta	
Tim O'Brien	Parramatta	
Jersey Flegg Coach		
1989		
Matt Tyquin	Parramatta	
Peter Heath	Parramatta	
Andrew Tymmons	Parramatta	

1990		
Tim Johnston	Parramatta	
Shaun Bradwell	Parramatta	
Martin Seal	Parramatta	
1992		
Mark Tyquin	Parramatta	
1993		
Mark Tyquin	Parramatta	
Ian Burge	Parramatta	
1996		
Ryan L'Estrange	Parramatta	
Adam Toro	Parramatta	
Trent Tavoletti	Parramatta	
1997		
Simon Gwynne	Parramatta	
Adam Toro	Parramatta	
Trent Tavoletti	Parramatta	
1998		
Wade L'Estrange	Parramatta	
Daniel Roddy	Parramatta	
1999		
Wade L'Estrange	Parramatta	
Daniel Roddy	Parramatta	
2000		
Ryan Steele	Parramatta	
Sean L'Estrange	Parramatta	
Wade L'Estrange	Parramatta	
Luke Taggert	Balmain	

2001		
Nathan McMillan	Parramatta	
2003		
John Williams	Parramatta	
Brett Ryan	Parramatta	
David Wah	Parramatta	
Heath L'Estrange	Parramatta	
Scott Heap	North Sydney	
Grant Toscan	North Sydney	
Cheyne Tickle	North Sydney	
2004		
John Williams	Parramatta	
Scott Heap	North Sydney	
Heath L'Estrange	Sydney City	
Michael Johnson	North Sydney	
Cheyne Tickle	North Sydney	
2005		
Wayne Boorer	Parramatta	
Danny Chiha	North Sydney	
Mitchell Erickson	North Sydney	
Paul Horan	North Sydney	
Zac Jourdan	North Sydney	
Michael Mansour	North Sydney	
Brad Price	North Sydney	
Oliver Saunders	North Sydney	
Reece Watson	North Sydney	
Jarred Farlow	Balmain	
2006		
Wayne Boorer	Parramatta	
Danny Chiha	North Sydney	
Mitchell Erickson	North Sydney	

Paul Horan	North Sydney	
Zac Jourdan	North Sydney	
Michael Mansour	North Sydney	
Brad Price	North Sydney	
Oliver Saunders	North Sydney	
Reece Watson	North Sydney	
Jarred Farlow	Balmain	
2007		
Jason Baitieri	Parramatta	
2018		
Dylan Clifford	Parramatta	
David Hollis	Parramatta	
Tyler Tuigamala	Parramatta	
Beni Valu	Parramatta	
Josh Curran	Roosters	
Jayden Griffin	North Sydney	
2019		
Tyler Field	Parramatta	
David Hollis	Parramatta	
Isaac Meehan	Parramatta	
Clayton Faulalo	Parramatta	
Joseph Small	Parramatta	
John-Paul Nohra	Parramatta	
Nick Tilburg	Parramatta	
Solomone Naiduki	Parramatta	
Tyler Tuigamala	Parramatta	
Harry Hanley	Parramatta	
Michael Goggins	Parramatta	
Cameron Bateup	Parramatta	
Etuale Lui	Parramatta	

Harry Duggan	Parramatta	
Bruce Ward	Parramatta	
Michael Cheer	Parramatta	
Ethan Le Blanc	Parramatta	
Jayden Griffin	Sydney	
Lachlan Walmsley	South Sydney	
Ezra Gibson	South Sydney	
Luke Mcdonald	South Sydney	
Tevita Piukana	South Sydney	
Johnathan Talamaivao	South Sydney	
Moung Dut	South Sydney	
2020		
David Hollis	Parramatta	
2022		
Ethan Sanders	Parramatta	
Nicholas Lenaz	Parramatta	
Myles Martin	Newcastle	
2023		
Ethan Sanders	Parramatta	
Nicholas Lenaz	Parramatta	
Jock Brazel	Parramatta	
Max Tupou	Parramatta	
Myles Martin	Newcastle	



TOYOTA CUP

2008	
Dom Nasso	Parramatta
Jason Baitieri	Parramatta
Jamie Buhrer	Manly Warringah
Ben James	Canterbury
Rhys Jack	Canterbury
2010	
John Batalibasi	Parramatta
Zac Douglas	Parramatta
Daniel Mahoney	Penrith
2011	
Tom Young	Parramatta
Cameron Picker	Parramatta
Daniel Mahoney	Parramatta
Jason Strickleton	Parramatta
Luke Fishburn	Parramatta
Kyrs Feeman	Melbourne
2016	
Josh Curran	Parramatta
Rhys Sciglitano	West Tigers
Niall Walker	West Tigers
Jake Brennan	South Sydney
2017	
Dylan Clifford	Parramatta
Jaydn Field	Parramatta
Rhys Sciglitano	West Tigers
Jake Brennan	Penrith
Josh Curran	Roosters

PRESIDENT’S CUP

1979	
Allan Woods	Parramatta
Steve Durrant	Parramatta
Dave Kitchener	Parramatta
1986	
Ian Roberts	Parramatta
1987	
Greg Harris	Parramatta
Stephen Day	Parramatta
1989	
Adam Toro	Parramatta
Trent Tavoletti	Parramatta
Simon Gwynne	Parramatta
1990	
Martin Seal	Parramatta
1991	
Martin Seal	Parramatta
Matthew Tyquin	North Sydney
Paul Griffin	North Sydney
Selwyn Brown	Manly
STATE OF ORIGIN	
Garry Thomas	
David Hall	
David Williams	
Jamie Buhrer	
Mark Carroll	

PREMIER LEAGUE

2000	
Wade Horder	Wests Tigers
2006	
Simon Micallef	Parramatta
David Williams	Parramatta
Blake Green	Parramatta
Rhian Gerard	North Sydney
Nathan Armit	Bulldogs
2007	
Simon Micallef	Parramatta
David Williams	Parramatta

AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLBOY REPS

1981	Wayne Morrow
1984	Greg Gibson
1986	Scott Wisemantel
1987	Scott Mahon
2000	Budd Frome
2000	Heath L'Estrange
2001	Nathan Armit
2004	Jason Baitieri
2006	Tim Robinson
2007	Jason Baitieri
2010	Gerard McCallum
2010	Harry Siejka
2012	Pauli Pauli
2014	Josh Curran (Merit)
2015	Ryan Papenhuyzen
2016	Tui Afualo
2016	Josh Curran
2016	Michael Tupou
2018	Jayden Tanner
2019	Tyler Field
2019	Samuel Loizou
2021	Jock Brazel



OZTAG REPRESENTATIVE PLAYERS

AUSTRALIAN OZTAG REPS

2015

Tyler Field

2016

Tyler Field
Broke Bonnell

2017

Zac Barry
Louis Reyes
Niwhai Puru
Reece Davison
Connor Mason
Drew Lloyd
Liam Haskins

2020

Alexandra Parsons
Keahlan Bray

2022

Keely Stevens
Keira Field

2023

Waiaria Ellis	U16 Girls
Nadelle Harrison	U16 Girls
Ava Jones	U16 Girls
Tia Matthews	U16 Girls
Danielle Seckold	U16 Girls
Naioka Tuipuloyu	U16 Girls
Olivia Va'Alele	U16 Girls
Ben Ellis	U16 Coach
Hunter Bell	U16 Boys
Jarred Haydon	U16 Boys
Lincoln Fletcher	U16 Boys

Noah Tamayo	U16 Boys
Keely Stevens	U18 Girls
Dylan Brettle	U18 Boys
Liam Haskins	U21s Men
Darcey Brettle	U21s Men
Dylan Brettle	U21s Men

NSW OZTAG REPS

2013

Jesse Featherstone
Dylan Brettle
Josh Patrick
Declan Doyle
Will Finch
Thomas Grech
Koby Brown
Josaia Delana
Isaac Butterworth
Andre Ambichi
Lachlan Apps
Jayden Jenkins
Luke Simpson
Ben Ollis
Harrison Esh
Trae Allen

2015

Keely Stevens
Taylor Gates
Teah Haskins
Mackenzie Davis
Holly McNally
Milla Ellaro
Emily Knez
Alexandra Parsons
Anneke Van Zoggel

Georgette Pellicano
Jordan Fenbow
Dylan Brettle
Declan Connolly
Luke Simpson
Nicholas Lenaz
Tyler Field
Mitchell Gardiner
Phil Banno
Jahi Pritchard
Brent Flavin
Emilia Kaafi

2016

Chloe Michoux
Kayla Morris
Keely Stevens
Taylor Gates
Jacqueline Sneesby
Emily Thurbon
Emily Fox
Joshua Patrick
Koby Brown
Trae Allen
Dlyan Brettle
Braithen Aspin
Jandamurra Stewart
Tallis Smith
Tyler Field
Mikayla Allam
Keira Field
Georgia Marshall
Sebastian Sultana
Jack Clark
Liam Haskins
Isaac Papadatos
Ryan Matulewliz

2022

Max Hayne	Under 11 Boys
Jackson Adams	Under 11 Boys
Temieke Withers	Under 13 Girls
Hine Rikiti	Under 13 Girls
Tegan Nicholas	Under 13 Girls
Bailey Hall	Under 13 Boys
Bailey Logue	Under 13 Boys
Levi Ellis	Under 13 Boys
Pati Jim	Under 14 Girls
Billie Gwynne	Under 14 Girls
Grace Button	Under 14 Girls
Waiaria Ellis	Under 15 Girls
Tia Matthews	Under 15 Girls
Danielle Seckold	Under 15 Girls
Ava Jones	Under 15 Girls
Olivia Va'Alele	Under 15 Girls
Dylan Prior	Under 15 Boys
Tyler Birnie	Under 15 Boys
Jack Attard	Under 16 Boys
Josiah Delana	Under 16 Boys
Luke Alderson	Under 16 Boys
Koby Rowe	Under 16 Boys

OZTAG NSW JUNIOR STATE CUP CLUB CHAMPIONS

2023

Baulkham Hills Oztag

OZTAG NSW JUNIOR STATE CHAMPIONSHIP WINNING TEAMS

2014

Under 9 Girls
Under 9 Boys

2015

Under 10 Girls

2016

Under 11 Girls
Under 15 Boys

2017

Under 9 Girls
Under 10 Girls
Under 12 Girls

2018

Under 10 Boys
Under 11 Girls
Under 12 Boys
Under 13 Girls

2019

Under 11 Boys
Under 11 Girls
Under 12 Girls

2020

Under 9 Boys
Under 12 Boys
Under 13 Girls
Under 15 Boys

2021

Under 10 Girls
Under 12 Boys
Under 14 Girls

2022

Under 14 Girls
Under 15 Girls
Under 16 Boys
Under 20s Men

2023

Under 10 Boys
Under 14 Boys
Under 15 Girls
Under 16 Girls
Under 17 Boys

NRL PLAYERS

NAME	TEAM/S						
John Kolc	Parramatta, Australia	Mark Carroll	Penrith, South Sydney, Manly, NSW, Australia	Tom Eisenhuth	Penrith Panthers, Melbourne Storm	Jason Baiteri	Sydney Roosters, Catalans Dragons, Saint-Estève, FC Lézignan XIII, Bradford Bulls, Pia Donkeys
Ron Hilditch	Parramatta, NSW, Australia	Paul James	Easts	Taniela Lasalo	Parramatta Eels		
Paul Mares	Parramatta, Eastern Suburbs	David Black	Parramatta	Leva Li	Gold Coast Titans	Dean Matterson	Manly Sea Eagles
Wade L'Estrange	Parramatta	Chris Warren	Western Suburbs, Western Reds	Tom Starling	Newcastle Knights, Canberra Raiders	Peni Terepo	Parramatta Eels
Daniel Irvine	Parramatta, South Sydney	Sandor Earl	Sydney City, Penrith, Canberra	Luke Keary	South Sydney, Sydney Roosters	Harry Siejka	Penrith Panthers, Wakefield Trinity Wildcats, Featherstone Rovers, Bradford Bulls
Blake Green	Parramatta, Canterbury, Cronulla	Jason Cayless	Parramatta, Sydney City, West Tigers	Zac Dockar-Clay	Hull Kingston Rovers, Canterbury Bulldogs, Sydney Roosters	Shaquai Mitchell	South Sydney
John Williams	Parramatta, Sydney Roosters, North Queensland, Cronulla	Alan Woods	Penrith, Western Suburbs			Yildeen Gordon	South Sydney, Canterbury Bulldogs, Penrith Panthers
Heath L'Estrange	Sydney Roosters, Manly-Warringah, Bradford (Eng)	Mark McDonnell	Eastern Suburbs	Ben Marschke	Sydney Roosters	Luke Sommerton	Penrith Panthers
		Nathan McMillan	Parramatta	Feleti Mateo	Parramatta Eels, London Broncos, New Zealand Warriors, Manly Sea Eagles, Salford Red Devils		
Chris Armit	Canterbury	Paul Martin	Canberra, Gold Coast	Michael Withers	Balmain Tigers, Bradford Bulls, Wigan Warriors		
Kane Cleal	Manly, South Sydney, Canterbury	Steve Williams	Parramatta	Steve Oday	South Sydney		
David Williams	Manly-Warringah, City Origin, NSW, Australia	Scott Hodson	Parramatta	Will Penisini	Parramatta Eels		
Jamie Buhner	Manly-Warringah, City Origin, NSW	Peni Terepo	Parramatta	Sam Loizou	Parramatta Eels		
Wade Roach	North Sydney	Ava Seumanufagai	West Tigers	Oregon Kaufusi	Parramatta Eels, Cronulla Sharks		
Tony Gavan	Penrith	Darren Tuite	Penrith	Daniel Harison	Manly Sea Eagles, Parramatta Eels, Manly Sea Eagles, London Broncos		
Glen Mansfield	Parramatta	Josh Curran	New Zealand Warriors	Matt Ryan	Parramatta Eels, Wakefield Trinity Wildcats, Featherstone Rovers, Bradford Bulls		
Wade Horder	North Sydney	Blake Green	Parramatta Eels, Cronulla Sharks, Canterbury Bulldogs, Hull Kingston Rovers, Wigan Warriors, Melbourne Storm, Manly Sea Eagles, New Zealand Warriors, Newcastle Knights	David Gower	Salford City Reds, Wests Tigers, St. George Illawarra, Manly Sea Eagles, Parramatta Eels		
Martin Seal	Parramatta, Western Reds			Josh Lewis	Sydney Roosters, Gold Coast Titans, Toulouse Olympique		
Mark Clinton	Parramatta	Puali Pauli	Parramatta Eels, Newcastle Knights, Wakefield Trinity, Salford Red Devils, York Knights	Samuel Hughes	Canterbury Bulldogs		
Scott Mahon	Parramatta, North Queensland	Tim Robinson	Manly Sea Eagles, Cronulla Sharks	Jayden Tanner	Canterbury Bulldogs		
Greg Gibson	Penrith, Manly	James Roberts	South Sydney, Penrith Panthers, Gold Coast Titans, Brisbane Broncos, South Sydney, Wests Tigers				
Wayne Morrow	Parramatta						
Garry Thomas	Parramatta	Martin Kennedy	Sydney Roosters				
David Hall	North Sydney, South Sydney, NSW						
Artie Papas	Cronulla						
Peter Johnston	Parramatta, South Sydney,, Illawarra						
Mark Blackburn	St. George						

60 YEARS OF PREMIERSHIPS

AGE GROUP	YEARS	WON
Under 7's	1976(1 st Division), 1977 (1), 1978 (1), 1980 (1), 1987 (1)	5
Under 8's	1977 (1&2 Division), 1978 (1), 1979 (1), 1981 (1), 1988 (1), 2007 (3), 2008 (1 & 3), 2009 (1), 2013 (2)	11
Under 9's	1973 (3), 1976 (1&3), 1978(1), 1979 (2), 1980 (1), 1982 (1), 1995(2), 2002 (1), 2004 (1), 2010 (1), 2018 (1&4), 2019 (1 Tier B), 2020 (1), 2023 (2)	16
Under 10's	1977 (1) , 1981 (1) , 1987 (1&3) , 1988 (2) , 1996 (1), 2001 (2), 2007 (1 & 4), 2009 (2), 2011 (4), 2018 (1&4 & Girls League Tag Div 1), 2020 (2), 2021* (1&2)	17
Under 11's	1973 (1), 1978 (1), 1982 (1), 1984 (1), 1989 (1), 1996 (4), 1997(1), 2002 (2), 2004 (1), 2005 (2), 2007 (4), 2008 (2), 2009 (2), 2010 (1), 2012 (4), 2013 (4), 2018 (1 Tier B), 2019 Girls LeagueTag (Div 1), 2020 (3) & Girls LeagueTag (Div 1), 2021* Girls LeagueTag (Div 1), 2022 (Div 1 & Girls LeagueTag (Div 1)	23
Under 12's	1979 (1), 1984 (1), 1987 (1), 1989 (1), 1992 (1), 1993 (1), 1997 (3)	14
	1998 (1), 2003 (1), 2004 (2 & 3), 2011 (2), 2016 (3), 2021* (1)	
Under 13's	1990 (1), 1991 (1), 1993 (1), 1998 (1), 1999 (1), 2006 (2), 2013 (3), 2017 (1&3), 2019 Girls LeagueTag (Div 1), 2021* Girls LeagueTag (Div 1)	11
Under 14's	1974 (3), 1977 (3), 1981 (1), 1985 (1), 1989 (1), 1990 (1), 2002 (2), 2005 (1&3), 2012 (2), 2013 (2 - Div1 Tier B), 2014 (2), 2022 (Div 1), 2023 Girls Gold Tackle (1)	14
Under 15's	1983 (2), 1984 (1&2), 1989 (1), 2000 (1), 2002 (1), 2016 (2) & Girls (Div 1), 2018 Girls LeagueTag (Div 1), 2019 (1&2) & Girls League Tag (Div 1), 2020 Girls LeagueTag (Div 1), 2021** Girls League Tag (Div 1), 2023 (1)	15
Under 16's	1981 (1), 1989 (1), 2002 (1), 2003 (2), 2008 (1), 2016 (2), 2017 (1 & 2), 2020 (2)	9

AGE GROUP	YEARS	WON
Under 17's	1965 (1), 1967 (2), 1988 (1), 1998 (1), 2003 (2), 2009 (2), 2013 (2), 2018 (2)	8
Under 18's	1984 (1), 2019 (2)	2
C Grade	1966 (2), 1987 (1), 1988 (1), 1995 (1), 1997 (1), 2000 (1), 2001 (1), 2005 (1), 2007 (1), 2010 (2), 2014 (1), 2015 (1), 2017 (1)	13
Under 23's	2018 (1)	1
A Reserve	1965, 2001	2
A Grade	1971, 2001	2
Sydney Shield	2023	1
Ron Massey Cup	2022	1

TOTAL PREMIERSHIPS 165

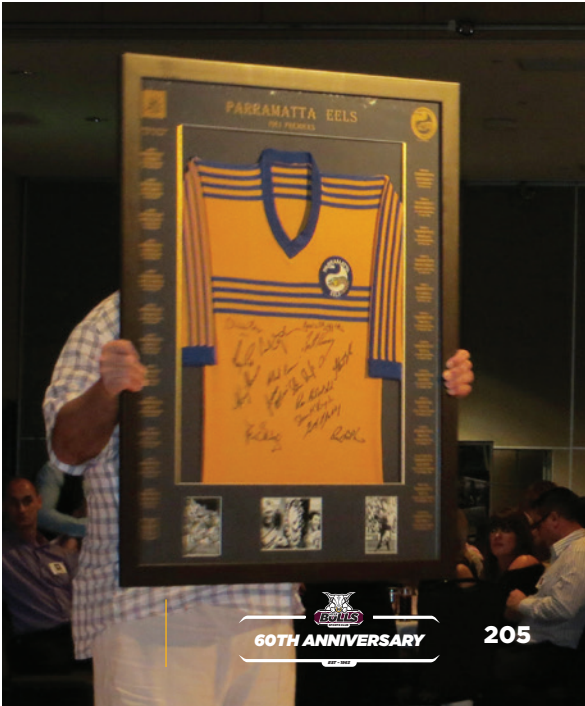
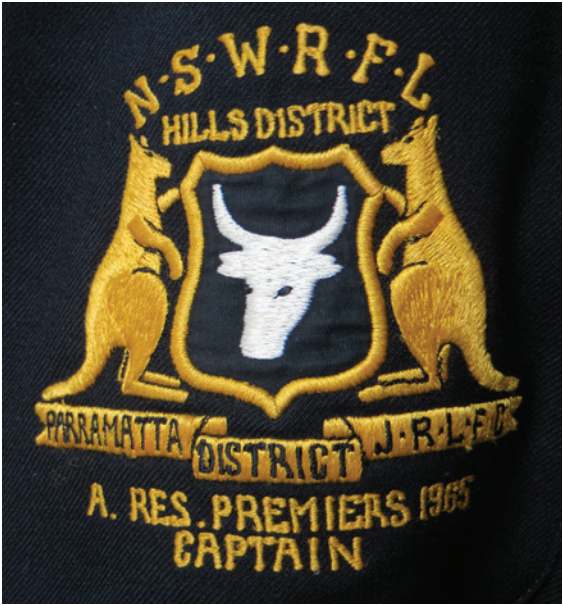
NOTE: beginning in 1998 no semi-finals or finals were contested by under 6, 7 or 8 teams.

* 2021 was affected by COVID19 and teams were awarded Premierships who finished top of the ladder when all competitions was suspended and closed.

PREMIERSHIPS PER YEAR

1965	2	1981	4	1993	2	2005	4	2016	4
1966	1	1982	2	1995	2	2006	1	2017	5
1967	1	1983	1	1996	2	2007	5	2018	9
1971	1	1984	5	1997	3	2008	3	2019	7
1973	2	1985	1	1998	3	2009	4	2020	6
1974	1	1987	5	1999	1	2010	3	2021*	6
1976	3	1988	4	2000	2	2011	2	2022	4
1977	4	1989	5	2001	4	2012	2	2023	4
1978	4	1990	2	2002	5	2013	4		
1979	3	1991	1	2003	3	2014	1		
1980	2	1992	1	2004	4	2015	1		

50 YEAR PRESENTATION & AWARDS DINNER



60 YEARS OF LEADERSHIP

YEAR	PRESIDENT	VICE PRESIDENT	TREASURER	SECRETARY
1963	Jack Dorahy (d)	Bill Heath (d)	Michael Gremmo Kevin Franks	Peter Norman (d)
1964	Ray Buckly (d)	J. Doherty	Michael Gremmo	Peter Norman (d)
1965	Keith Woellner (d)		Michael Gremmo	
1966	Keith Woellner (d)		Michael Gremmo	
1967	Keith Woellner (d)		Michael Gremmo	Keith Hoyle (d)
1968	Allen Quinn (d)		Allan Weeks (d)	Keith Hoyle (d)
1969	Keith Woellner (d)		Allan Weeks (d)	Keith Hoyle (d)
1970	Keith Woellner (d)		Michael Gremmo	Keith Hoyle (d)
1971	Keith Woellner (d)	Phill Wilson	Michael Gremmo	Keith Hoyle (d)
1972	Phill Wilson	John Beasley	Rod Barnett	Keith Hoyle (d)
1973	Phill Wilson		Michael Gremmo	Keith Hoyle (d)
1974	Stan Cobcroft (d)		Michael Gremmo	Bob Collings
1975	Stan Cobcroft (d)		Michael Gremmo	Barry Rudd
1976	Stan Cobcroft (d)		Michael Gremmo	Barry Rudd
1977	Stan Cobcroft (d)		Bob Rose (d)	Barry Rudd
1978	Stan Cobcroft (d)		Bob Rose (d)	Barry Rudd
1979	Brian McGuiness		Hazel Morrow (d) Senior Teams	Howard Painter (d) Junior Teams
1980	Brian McGuiness		Hazel Morrow (d) Senior Teams	Barry Rudd
1981	Warren Heath (d)			Barry Rudd
1982	Brian Miles			Barry Rudd
1983	Dennis Foulstone			Brian Miles



1963 - 2023



YEAR	PRESIDENT	VICE PRESIDENT	TREASURER	SECRETARY
1984	Dennis Foulstone		Bob Palmer	Barry Rudd
1985	Barry Rudd		Bob Palmer	Brian Witt (d)
1986	Geoff Sommerville (d)		Bob Palmer	Brian Horder
1987	Brian Witt (d)	Kevin Smith (d)	Bob Palmer	Brian Horder
1988	Brian Witt (d)	Kevin Smith (d)	Bob Palmer	Brian Horder
1989	Brian Horder	Kevin Smith (d)	Bob Palmer	Barry Rudd
1990	Brian Horder	Kevin Smith (d)	Bob Palmer	Barry Rudd
1991	Brian Horder		Kevin Smith (d)	Ian Auld
1992	Barry L'estrage	Ross Crawley (d)		Ian Auld
1993	Dennis Foulstone			Barry Newsome
1994	Dennis Foulstone			
1995	Allan Cook			
Removed	Peter Hogan	John Castle	Narelle Hogan	Craig Town
1996	Allan Cook	Barbara Abbott	Dennis Foulstone	Carolyn Smale
1997	Allan Cook		Dennis Foulstone	Dennis Foulstone
1998	Allan Cook			
1999	David Witchelo		Dennis Foulstone	Phil Chapman
2000	David Witchelo		John Young (d)	Phil Chapman
2001	David Witchelo		John Young (d)	Phil Chapman
2002	Mark Mahoney	Larry Jenkins	John Young (d)	Mark Stockdale
2003	Mark Stockdale	Bev Sullivan	John Young (d)	Steve Sullivan
2004	Mark Stockdale	Bev Sullivan	John Young (d)	Steve Sullivan



60 YEARS OF LEADERSHIP

YEAR	PRESIDENT	VICE PRESIDENT	TREASURER	SECRETARY
2005	Mark Stockdale	Wayne Walpole	John Young (d)	Steve Sullivan
2006	Mark Stockdale	Wayne Walpole	John Young (d)	Steve Sullivan
2007	Steve Sullivan	John Young (d)	John Young (d)	Boris Mitchell
2008	Steve Sullivan	John Young (d)	John Young (d)	Boris Mitchell
2009	Leon Don Glenn Starr	Steve Marks	Rob Zecchin	Sue Lock
2010	Glenn Starr	Matt Reardon	Rick Palin	Matt Reardon
2011	Glenn Starr	Matt Reardon	Rick Palin	Matt Reardon
2012	Glenn Starr	Matt Reardon	Rick Palin Matt Reardon	Lance Denison
2013	Glenn Starr	Matt Reardon	Rick Palin	Lance Denison
2014	Glenn Starr	Matt Reardon	Rick Palin	Lance Denison
2015	Glenn Starr	Matt Reardon	Rick Palin	Greg Newbery
2016	Glenn Starr	Anthony Jones	Anthony Jones	Rick Palin
2017	Glenn Starr	Michael Gremmo	Mark Mahoney	Rick Palin
2018	Michael Gremmo	Robert Zecchin	Mark Mahoney	Rick Palin
2019	Michael Gremmo	Peter Beck	Mark Mahoney	Rick Palin
2020	Michael Gremmo	Peter Beck	Mark Mahoney	Rick Palin
2021	Michael Gremmo	Peter Beck	Mark Mahoney	Rick Palin
2022	Michael Gremmo	Peter Beck	Mark Mahoney	Rick Palin
2023	Michael Gremmo	Aaron Gonzalez	Mark Mahoney	Rick Palin



LIFE MEMBERS

John Billings	Jenny Byrne
Barry L'Estrange	John Noble
Denis Foulstone	Barrie Jones
Brian Horder	Paul Griffin
Barbara Abbott	Peter Heath
Bob Collings	Matthew Reardon
Michael Gremmo (Snr)	Steve Marks
Barry Rudd	Ian McNab
Kevin Shanahan	Glenn Starr
Steve Sullivan	Leon Don
John Abbott	Robert Zecchin
Phil O'Brien	Leon Carroll
Allan Weekes	Rick Palin
Keith Churchland	Michael Gremmo (Jnr)
Allan Cook	

DECEASED LIFE MEMBERS

Mick Shanahan	Warren Heath
John Young	Marj Radford
Bob Rose	Keith Hoyle
Barry Clapham	Brian Witt
Keith Woellner	Stan Cobcroft

CLUB PATRONS

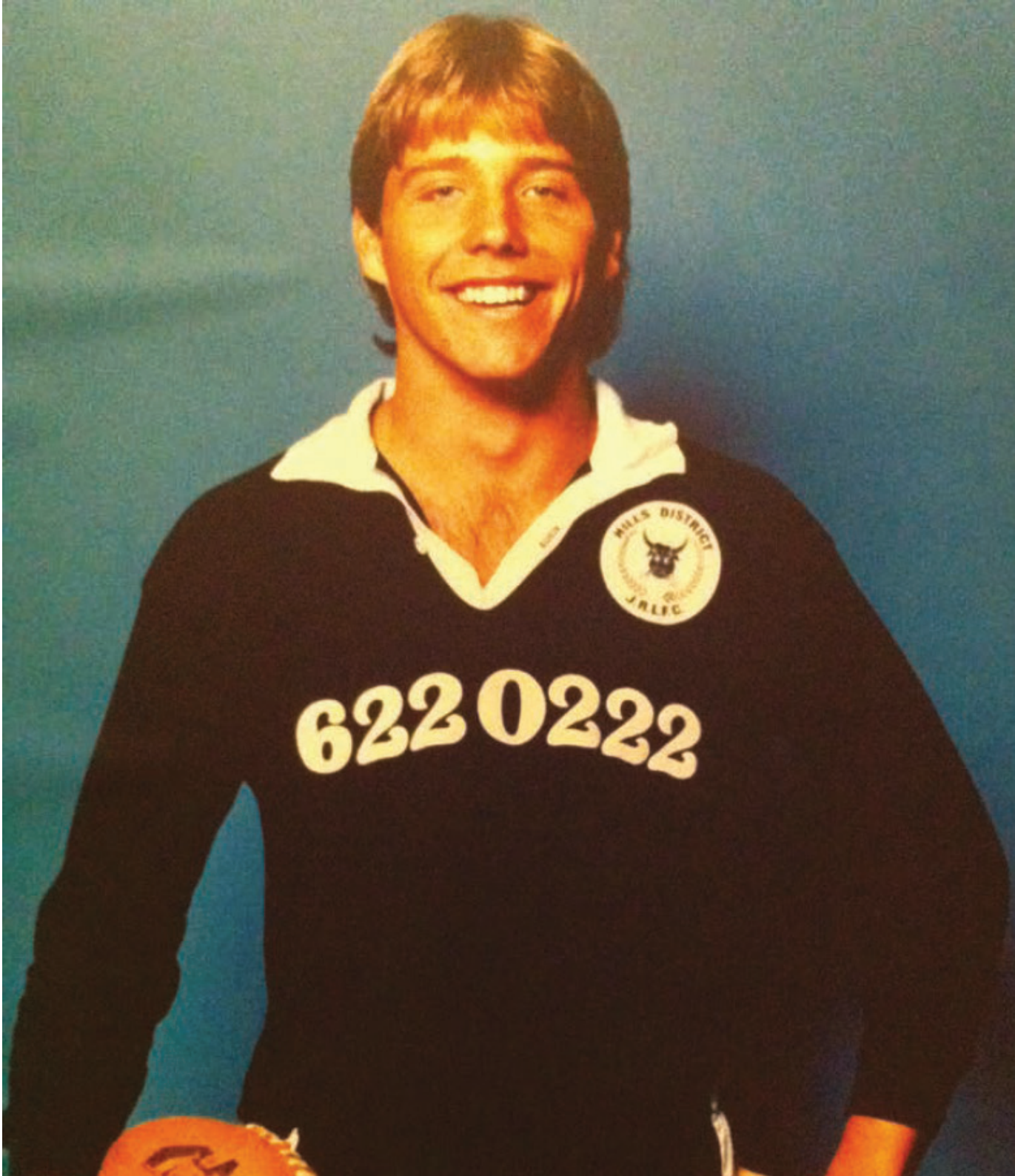
John Kolc	Ron Hilditch
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GONE, BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

Jake Astill
Bill Brien
Ray Buckley
Ian Burns
Jack Cameron
Max Cardwell
Craig Chapman
Burt Chick
Heath Churchland
Barry Clapham
John Clifford
Stan Cobroft
Ross Crawley
Ron Drought
Greg Frew
Dianne Gates
John Gates
David Geale
Elsa Geale
Harold Geale
Michael Green
Elaine Gremmo
Nathan Gremmo
Jack Griffin

Fred Harrison
Michael Harrison
Stuart Hayward
Scott Heap
Warren Heath
Paul Heath
Jeff Holland
Keith Hoyle
Dean Jarrett
Peter Kuseley
Frank Lamb
Chris Langlands
Michael Lachmund
Kevin Lohan
Grant Lonergan
Peter Mcandrew
Andrew Mccaffery
Stephen Miles
Mick Moore
Hazel Morrow
Wayne Morrow
Sara Newbery
Howard Painter
Len Quinn

Marj Radford
Len Reeves
Andy Reid
Don Rogers
Bob Rose
Alan Sandstrom
Peter Sayers
Mick Shanahan
Kevin Smith
Harry Stone
Christan Taunton
Bert Tomlinson
Bruce Tyler
Kevin Vahtrik
Bill Walters
Allan Weekes
Roy Wilkinson
Brian Witt
Andrew Wisemantel
Keith Woellner Snr
Norma Woellner
John Woods
John Young





60TH ANNIVERSARY

EST - 1963