

Robert Hyde Tribute 12th July 2015

- Robert and I were both raised in Greensborough - within a short distance of this ground
- We are both sons of former players - and were both fanatical Boro supporters as kids in the 60's
- The 60's were a very good time to be a Boro supporter at School
- The Club had played in 12 x Grand Finals from 1952 to 1967 – winning 7 x Flags
- The kids at school who didn't barrack for Boro (*for example the Mont supporters*) basically hated our guts
- Our local Boro heroes were :
 - Joe Murphy
 - Jack Carmody
 - Bob Murphy
 - The Brimacombe Twins
 - Leo Muir
 - Trevor Partington
 - Andy O'Neil
 - Stephen Lee
 - Graeme Coventry
 - Barry Wasley
 - Johnny Mitchell
- Although we both played plenty of footy at school, the introduction of real junior football was an absolute 'god send' to kids of our age
- It was simply a matter of *'how good's this – when do we start!?'*
- Robert began in the Under 13's
- Boro had 4 x teams - the Blues, Blacks, Maroons & Golds
- Rob's father Norm, together with Joe Murphy, Ray Dickson, Ray Skals & Dick Burrows, founded the Greensborough Midget League (U13's)
- They also started an U15 team in the PRJSFL
- The Diamond Valley Football League (apparently) did not want to spend the money
- Robert played for the Greensborough Blacks coached by Ray Dickson
- Ray was a true Boro stalwart, and an outstanding coach and mentor of junior players – he coached the Blacks for many years

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- I didn't see too many of Robert's games for the Blacks
- My brothers, Neil and possibly Andrew, would have played with Robert for Blacks at this time
- I was 16 months older than Robert, and started in the U15's
- We often played at other grounds and later on the Sunday afternoon
- I did, however, know him quite well, because he and I were always hanging around the rooms, especially at the senior games on Saturday.
- I saw enough of him though, even at this early stage, to know he was a 'natural' and had a lot of talent
- By 1969 Robert had progressed to the U15's, and I had progressed to the U17's
- The U17's were the Club's 3rd Eighteen in those days, and the U15's were the 4ths
- Also, by 1969, the Diamond Valley League had taken over Greensborough's junior footy competition
- We had 2 x U15 teams – the Colts & the Rovers
- I reckon the Colts fancied themselves a bit in those days because they got to wear the real Boro jumper, ie. Green with White Monogram
- Somehow too, they always seemed to get the pick of the new players
- Maybe I'm being paranoid – *I probably am*
- The Rovers wore a green jumper with a white V
- Robert played for the Rovers where he was fortunate to be coached by Leo Muir
- Lew Hall was the Rovers' team manager
- Leo Muir was an outstanding senior Boro premiership player in the 1960's and a professional athlete
- He was also named in Boro's Team of the Century
- Leo coached like he played – tough as nails and in your face
- This was probably just right for Robert as he was making a rapid and inevitable transition from junior to senior football

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- Although the Colts won the 1969 U15 premiership, the Rovers were a very competitive finalist
- Robert won the Rover's Best & Fairest Award in 1969
- During that season, Robert and I became team mates for the first time in U17's
- While still playing for the U15 Rovers, a 14 year old Robert also played 5 x games in the U17's (Thirds)
- The thirds played on Saturday mornings before the main games
- In 1969 the U17's were coached by former Collingwood player, George Nelson
- Gary Partington was assistant coach
- It was a champion team, and lost only one game for the season (*in pissing rain at Lakeside*)
- We won the premiership by over 10 goals
- Our full forward that season was Mick Horan who kicked 117 goals
- I'm sure Robert must have played in the U17's on Saturday and the U15's on Sunday
- A 14 year old Robert Hyde fitted into that U17 team like a veteran
- He held his own and played well against the much bigger and stronger opposition
- To cap off a great year for the Hyde's in 1969, Norm was awarded a much deserved Life Membership of the Club
- In 1970 Robert formally moved up into the U17's and played 21 x games
- The 3rds were coached that year by Ted Collings, a recently recruited senior player who was a very good full back in the early 1970's
- Ted preceded other prominent full-backs in the 1970's like Ray Butler and Jeff Clifton
- The 3rds won the flag again in 1970 and Robert was awarded the 'Most Consistent Player' trophy
- In 1971 Robert played only 1 x game in the 3rds and as a 16 year old started his brilliant senior career at Boro

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- Again he and I became team mates and played together in the seniors under Neville Waller
- Neville, a resident of Greensborough, was centre half back in Collingwood's 1953 premiership team
- He had also captain-coached (*the old enemy*) Montmorency in the early 1960's
- Robert had an outstanding first year and won the senior team's Most Improved Player Award
- Other first year players in 1971 were :
 - Ian Balme
 - Johnny Douglas
 - Peter McCullough
 - Ross Treacy
 - Paul Money
 - Michael Ware
- The senior Best & Fairest that year was Barry Day
- Established players in that team included :
 - Graeme Coventry
 - Bruce Koeford
 - Milton Hawley
 - Gary Partington
 - Barry Sinclair
 - John Schultze
 - Max Thomas
 - Bruce Bate
 - Peter & Nipper West
- We missed the seniors finals again in 1971
- We looked to better things in 1972 under Ed Murphy (ex-Richmond) our new senior coach
- Also, the much awaited return of Denis O'Brien from Collingwood
- In 1972 things did improve for Boro
- We just slipped into the Four
- We beat Macleod in a high standard First Semi Final at Warringal Park
- Coming back from 17 x points down at ¾ time



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- As a 16 year old, Robert played at Centre Half Back and was clearly Best on the Ground
- My recollection of him that day is still clear
- He just stood his ground in the backline, *often in the middle of a pack*, and pulled down mark after mark
- Macleod had a very good side with blokes like :
 - Bob Beattie (after he left Boro),
 - Terry Hehir (before he came to Boro),
 - Geoff Noble
 - Alan Dawes
 - Chubby Vadja
 - The Roberts Brothers
- We had a week off then saddled up against Reservoir Lakeside in the Preliminary Final, also at Warringal Park
- At $\frac{3}{4}$ time of a very willing match, we were 2 x points up
- But we got tired in the last quarter and were simply out-gunned
- At centre half back, and against some very big and very tough Lakeside forwards, Robert never lowered his colours
- He was again judged our best player – along with Ian Balme.
- Robert won another award that year – I think Most Consistent Player
- He had completed two outstanding years as a teenager playing seniors in the DVFL and had starred in two finals,
- It was no wonder Collingwood pounced, and took him away in 1973
- I continued on at Boro until 1981
- I never had the pleasure of playing alongside Robert again
- But I did have the pleasure of watching him quickly establish himself as an elite VFL player
- I saw him win the Copeland Trophy in 1976 - & play in both the Grand Finals of 1977
- From my experience - watching and playing at Boro since the late 1950's – I do not rate any Greensborough player higher than Robert Hyde

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- He is the best mark I have ever seen at the club
- My father and I both share this view
- My father often said that no matter at what level Robert played - be it U13's, U15's, DVFL or VFL – he always rose to the occasion and played the same
- He just slipped into a team and played well - as if he had always been there
- His boy Matthew is a bit the same
- As a coach, I have no hesitation rating him Greensborough's greatest coach of all time
- He came back in 1983 to captain-coach two premierships in a row and break a 16 year grand final & premiership drought – the longest in the club's history
- He came back again last year to break another 16 year Division 1 premiership drought and restore this mighty club to its rightful place
- This great club has played in 32 x Grand Finals, and won 18 x Senior Premierships since 1922
- Robert is the only man to have coached Boro to 3 x premierships
- I am very proud to be here today to pay tribute to a former team mate
- He has given outstanding leadership and service to Greensborough, both on and off the field, over many years
- I was sorry to see him retire from coaching after last season's triumph, but I understand why he would do it
- Like the true and humble champion, he would want to go out on top - and on his own terms
- On that basis – what better terms could you want !
- Well done Robert - reflect with pride on your magnificent contribution to Greensborough Football Club

Bruce McDowell – 12th July 2015

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