

## FOOTBALL CLUB MEMORIES OF THE 60'S – John Colling.

In 1999, the Hyden Karlgarin Football club had a reunion at which its history was relived, and speakers spoke of specific periods. However, for some reason, the period of the 1960's when we played in the 4 team "Hyden and Districts Association" was not mentioned which was a disappointment, so I decided to write down a few of my memories as I consider this to be very important in the development of the Club.

When I went to live in Hyden in 1955, we played football in the Corrigin Association, which consisted of teams from Corrigin, Bullaring, Bilbaron, Kondinin, Kulin and Karlgarin/Hyden (centred at Karlgarin). Sometime in the early 1960's the WA Football League decided they wanted bigger and stronger football leagues and actively encouraged this to happen and we were soon joined by Yealering and Dudinin which added to our travelling. Then, soon after Brookton and Beverley were added to the Association. By this time, there were players from East of Hyden and travelling was becoming unreasonable, and this resulted in players dropping out and they were battling to get a team.

It was then, that Tom Higgins dropped in to see me, and said that he was going to see Ben Mouritz (which is what people did when they wanted something done), with the idea of giving the young men some sort of football to play. Tom's thoughts were – even if we met every second Sunday and picked two teams and had a game, anything to keep football going. He asked me if I would help. By this time I had not played football for 3 years, so, from, this, with the help of a lot of people, we were able to form a four team Association, consisting of Hyden, Karlgarin Lake Varley and Pingaring.

We played under WAFL rules, except in some cases we had our own by-laws, one of which was, we were allowed to lend players if the team that was short. Another was to allow players to leave the ground and come back on again. This was designed to allow more players to have a game if you were lucky enough to have too many players. We could claim here that we were the first Football Association to have an interchange bench!

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The main aim was to keep football alive in the district and give young men something to do. It surprised me how many people came along to watch. The fact that Hyden and Karlgarin had their own teams, sparked a lot of interest. However, Pingaring were always short of players and soon lost good players to Lake Grace so had to pull out. The likelihood of having three teams was not appealing and with a lot of head scratching and road counting, we decided Hyden could field two teams. These numbers included non-players who, when asked, agreed to come out of retirement. The fact that some were well over 30 years of age, and probably had not played since school days, was testament to the people of Hyden to keep football going.

The available players were divided into Hyden and East Hyden and we drew a line to separate the two teams. It was suggested that each team needed ladies evenly, and East Hyden came up a bit short, so the boundary, which came through Russel Mouritz' property, was shifted from one paddock to another so Russel and Val Mouritz were drafted from Hyden to East Hyden.

There were some fears expressed that Hyden, having two teams, would divide the district. With this in mind it was decided we would always have a barbecue after every game between the two Hyden teams. Looking back it was pleasing to remember how the two teams could play so competitively and remain good friends.

I also remember what great social atmosphere football created in the district. We also ran our own 'Injured Players Fund'. This was funded by running a one day carnival on the weekend when the Country Football Carnival was held and all Clubs had a bye. We would invite teams from Naremben, Lake Grace, Kulin and Kondinin plus our own two teams from Hyden, would combine. These were, I recall, both a social and financial success. The object of this Football Association was to keep the game alive until the time was right to reform and enter a bigger league.

I had heard on more than one occasion how difficult it was to make that move, which shows how important it was to keep football going. If it had died completely, it would have been almost impossible to resurrect. I therefore believe the 1960's were probably the most important period for the Club.