



LIFE MEMBER

Ronald C. ("Ron") Hovey OAM

25 August 1932—



Ron Hovey was junior table tennis champion in Geelong at 14. He also played tennis and senior cricket when he was 17.

Ron began playing with the Geelong Football Club in 1948 aged sixteen, in the Under-19s coached by Les Laver and Fred Hawking. He rode his bike to training with his Gladstone bag on the handlebars. Ron worked for Les Laver for four or five years delivering groceries to shops around Geelong. In 1954 he bought a Bedford truck and started a transport business. He says:

I had £100 at the time, drew all the money out of my Provident Fund (in those days you got three pounds a game and one pound ten in the Provident Fund.) The business got a little bit bigger, and bigger. My two brothers had a little transport business at Mt Moriac, out in the country, carting livestock, grass hay and grain. I got a bit too much work, so we all combined together to make Hovey's Transport. We had some marvellous contracts in Geelong. One of the contracts we had through football was the Ford Motor Company, eight or nine trucks every day delivering to their storage sheds all around Geelong. We used to run interstate to Port Pirie and Sydney, but the main

Ron Hovey was the youngest of eleven children from the well-known Hovey sporting family from Modewarre. Their father played football and cricket, and at one time there were five Hoveys in the Moriac cricket team—Tom, Bernie, Jim, Cedric and their father.

The Hovey family connection with Geelong Football Club spans from the 1940s to the present. Ron's older brothers, Ced and Jim, also played for Geelong firsts, while brothers Arthur and Bernie played for the seconds. Bernie was said to be the best of the Hovey footballers, but he joined the airforce and was killed during the Second World War. In later years, Jim's son Wayne played for Geelong and Ron's son Brendan played in the thirds (Under-19s), kicking eight goals at Waverley in one match.



Ron Hovey

work we did was Coles deliveries all over Victoria to the country stores. When we sold to Lindsay Fox we had about 32 trucks.¹

In his career with Geelong, Ron played 141 day matches, 2 night matches, 3 interstate matches, kicked 25 goals and received 26 Brownlow medal votes. He also played in 18 of the '26 games without a loss' in 1952–53.

A left-foot kick, Ron represented Victoria in 1955 and 1959 and was captain of the Geelong team for five matches in 1960. Unfortunately, he was then injured and had to give up League football. Col Hutchinson describes him as:

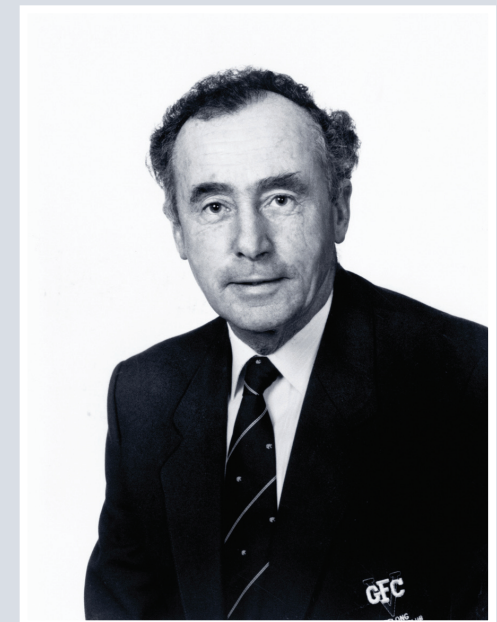
...a very useful utility player who was equally at home on the forward and back lines ... He possessed considerable skill and dash. He rode bumps very well without losing balance and was able to twist through packs and execute blind turns to 'lose' opponents.²

In the 1950s, Ron Hovey and Peter Pianto were known for their singing. They sang on the bus and on television in the Kiaora Sports Parade, and some forty years later they were still asked to sing at 1950s reunions.

Ron joined the GFC general committee in 1961, was Vice-President 1981–87, and President of Geelong Football Club for nearly ten years (1989–1998). He is a life member of Geelong Football Club, life member of the social club, life member of the Pivots and life member of the AFL.

Ron was the No. 1 member of the Past Players and Officials Club in 1987 along with Russ Renfrey and was made a life member in 1997.

He comments that during his time as President of GFC, Geelong played in four Grand Finals and lost all of them. Ron believes they should have won in 1989 but Hawthorn was just too good for them. However, he says 'we had the privilege of watching one of the greatest players every week—Gary Ablett Snr. It took a bit of the misery off the loss. That was the highlight of that era.'³



Ron Hovey with players Garry "Buddha" Hocking, Bill Brownless and Michael Mansfield

Sources

- 1 Ron Hovey, interviewed by Susan Kruss, 11 Dec. 2012
- 2 Hutchinson, C. 1984, *Cat's Tales*, Geelong Advertiser Pty Ltd, p. 155
- 3 Ron Hovey, interviewed by Susan Kruss, 11 Dec. 2012