

1970

The dawn of the seventies heralded a whole new era for the Bulldogs.

After watching Natta Bealiba and Lexton methodically construct powerful football teams, Avoca realised they would have to follow similar guidelines if they were to be competitive.

Under the leadership of its President, John Field, the club pulled off a huge recruiting coup by signing former Maryborough and Ballarat League Champion, Terry Long.

Although he was approaching the twilight of his career, Terry's influence on the players far exceeded the club's wildest expectations.

As a coach, there have been none better and none more respected.

Gradually he moulded the team together and introduced them to the play on style of football that was suddenly in vogue.

Avoca finished the season third, but lost the first semi final by 42 points Lexton.

FIRST SEMI FINAL

Avoca 0.2 4.7 5.7 7.10.52

Lexton 6.9 10.11 12.19 12.22.94

Avoca Goals: Des Taggart 3, John Evans 1, Gary McKenzie 1, Ken Hall 1, Jim Jess 1.

Avoca Best: Keith Chiswell, Des Taggart, Bill Wardlaw, Terry Long, George Wardlaw.

Brian Coghlan won the club Best & Fairest, whilst Gary McKenzie was Best Under 20 and Ken Hall Best Under 18.

It was fine year for 18 year old Ken Hall, who also topped the goal kicking with 25 goals, but, tragically, a knee injury would later frustrate his ambitions.

Although he was only 15 years of age. Jim Jess was now a regular member of the senior team and booted 21 goals for the season.

After many years in the seniors, Alf Hunter easily won the Reserves Best & Fairest.

Mark Drummond won the Under 15 Best & Fairest from Alan Murphy and Geoff Drummond. Richard Field won the Most Determined award.

Terry Long and Gary McKenzie were selected in the Lexton League side.

Natte Bealiba won back-to-back premierships, beating Lexton by 31 points.

[go to 1971](#)

1971 R/Up



At last Avoca seemed to have the ideal combination of youth and experience.

The senior and reserves playing list included:

Terry Long, Ron Verlin, Bruce Farnsworth, Lance Farnsworth, Peter Jess, Gary McKenzie, Lloyd Gollop, Brian Coghlan, Billy Wardlaw, Ian Drummond, John Evans, Neville Field, Ken Hall, Pat Harrison, Jim Jess, Eddie Wardlaw, Paul Gothard, George Wardlaw, Keith Chiswell, Rob Astbury, Deale Farnsworth, Alan Burge, Stephen Phillips, Roly Reynolds, David Streeter, Tom Farnsworth, Des Lindsay, Peter Carter, Alf Hunter, Col Evans, Noel Farnsworth, Mark Drummond, Lindsay Harrison, Robert Crooks, Russell Jones. Geoff Drummond, Mark Drummond, Bob Wardlaw, Ricky Carter, Michael Mitchell, Kevin Matthews, and John Harvey.

[Terry Long](#), who worked a farm near Maryborough, was proving to be the perfect coach, a courageous and respected footballer, and an astute football brain.

It came as no surprise when Terry was appointed captain of the Lexton Football League side.

[Jim Jess](#), aged just 16 years, was also selected in the league team, whilst Geoff and Mark Drummond, Phil Holland and Dale Gothard were selected in the league's Under 15 team.

Peter Jess proved to be the recruit of the year, booting 54 goals and finishing runner up by just one vote to Howard Locket in the Lexton League Best & Fairest award.

Ironically, the man who is now renowned for the million dollar contracts he negotiates for his clients, played with Avoca for no remuneration.

A budding young journalist, named Stephen Phillips, was also enticed to Avoca.

During his youth Steve often spent school holidays at Avoca staying with his relations, Bill and Connie Robinson.

By working at The Age and Sun newspapers, Steve established himself as one of Australia's foremost sports reporters, and then carved an enviable career in the television industry which took him around the world and to several Olympic Games.

He was a key member of the 1971 team but at the end of the season, had to choose between playing football and concentrating on his career.

Although the Bulldogs finished second on the ladder, they were beaten twice during the season by Lexton.

Terry Long knew if his boys were to have any real chance of winning the premiership, they had to turn on a convincing performance against Lexton in the Second Semi Final.

And perform they did, In a thrilling match Avoca led until moments before the final siren, when the Tigers leveled the scores for a draw.

SECOND SEMI FINAL

Avoca 6.6 9.9 15.15 16.15.111

Lexton 0.3 7.4 10.5 16.15.111

Avoca Goals: Rob Astbury 5, Brian Coghlan 4, Gary McKenzie 2, Peter Jess 2, Paul Gothard 1, Stephen Phillips 1, John Evans 1, George Wardlaw 1.

Avoca Best: Terry Long, Brian Coghlan, Rob Astbury, George Wardlaw, Gary McKenzie.

Although the team was jubilant in the knowledge that they could match it with Lexton, the club was shattered later that night when

brilliant rover Peter Jess was badly injured in a motor vehicle accident.

More info in following link. ([The gospel according to Jess](#))

Peter, who had been the life blood of the side, lost the sight of an eye.

The tragedy seemed to inspire the team, who won the replay of the second semi final by 31 points.

SECOND SEMI FINAL REPLAY

Avoca 2.2 7.8 9.9 13.14.92

Lexton 2.6 3.7 6.10 8.13.61

Avoca Goals: Rob Astbury 3, Brian Coghlan 3, Dale Farnsworth 3, Gary McKenzie 2, Neville Field 1, Ron Verlin 1.

Avoca Best: Terry Long, Brian Coghlan, Neville Field, Jim Jess, John Evans, Gary McKenzie.

Avoca won enormous respect for the spirit they displayed after the tragic loss of Peter Jess from the team.

However, the absence of a player with the caliber and experience of Peter proved a big handicap in the final analysis, with Lexton winning the Grand Final by 12 points.

GRAND FINAL

Avoca 1.3 2.6 6.9 9.14.68

Lexton 2.4 6.10 8.16 10.20.80

Avoca Goals: Rob Astbury 5, Brian Coghlan 2, Keith Chiswell 1, Ron Verlin 1.

Avoca Best: Neville Field, Rob Astbury, Keith Chiswell, Ron Verlin, Brian Coghlan, Stephen Phillips, George Wardlaw.

Peter Jess was extremely unfortunate in the Lexton league Best & Fairest count. Just one vote separated him and Lexton great Howard "Plugger" Lockett. The club Best & Fairest was won by Neville Field from Terry Long and Peter Jess.

Jim Jess was Best Under 18, whilst Pat Harrison and John Evans, won Best Under 20 awards during the finals.

Rob Astbury kicked 84 goals to win the Lexton league and club goal kicking awards.

Rob's father, C.K (Keith) Astbury, was awarded a Life Membership and Ian Drummond was Best Clubman.

In the Reserves, Alf Hunter collected his second Best & Fairest award, whilst Lloyd Gollop was Runner Up.

Geoff Drummond polled an amazing 94 votes in the Under 15 Best & Fairest award, with Phil Holland runner up.

[go to 1972](#)

1972 R/Up





Avoca was entitled to approach the 1972 season with confidence.

However, the reigning premiers, Lexton, had not been idle over the summer and again emerged as the team to beat, and became stronger as the season grew.

Avoca's senior players were:

Terry Long (Captain/Coach), Ron Verlin, Eddie Wardlaw, Lance Farnsworth, Peter Jess, Alf Hunter, Alan Murphy, Brian Coghlan, Bill Wardlaw, John Evans, Neville Field, Dale Farnsworth, Mark Drummond, Lloyd Gollop, Pat Harrison, Don Rayner, Jim Jess, George Wardlaw, Keith Chiswell, Rob Astbury, Ross Rankin, Paul Gothard, Alan Burge, David Ross and Bruce Farnsworth.

Six Avoca players were selected in the Lexton Football League side: Jim Jess, Neville Field, Keith Chiswell, Gary McKenzie, George Wardlaw, and Brian Coghlan, who was voted best afield.

Dale Farnsworth and Mark Drummond were selected in the Under 15 LFL Under 19 team, whilst Geoff Drummond and Phil Holland were picked to represent the LFL Under 16 team.

Seventeen year old Jim Jess featured in the individual highlight of the season. After being switched from Full back to Full Forward in a match against Amphitheatre, Jim proceeded to boot 16 goals to smash the Lexton league record set two weeks prior by Landsborough's Laurie Ploughman with 14 goals.

After finishing in second position, Avoca were quickly brought back to size when they were overwhelmed by Lexton in the second semi final.

SECOND SEMI FINAL

Avoca 3.2 8.7 11.7 12.14.86

Lexton 6.2 12.8 19.11 28.13.181

Avoca Goals: Brian Coghlan 4, Rob Astbury 3, Jim Jess 1, George Wardlaw 1, Peter Jess 1, David Ross 1, Ron Verlin 1.

Avoca Best: Jim Jess, George Wardlaw, Rob Astbury, Keith Chiswell, Terry Long.

Avoca regrouped and won the Preliminary Final convincingly, beating Navarre by 47 points.

PRELIMINARY FINAL

Avoca 3.5 7.11 13.14 18.21.129

Navarre 3.2 5.3 8.5 12.10.82

Avoca Goals: Rob Astbury 7, Brian Coghlan 4, Terry Long 2, Neville Field 1, Dale Farnsworth 1, Ron Verlin 1, Paul Gothard 1, Mark Drummond 1.

Avoca Best: Rob Astbury, Keith Chiswell, Neville Field, George Wardlaw, Jim Jess.

In a tension packed Grand Final, Lexton came from behind to snatch the premiership by 20 points.

GRAND FINAL

Avoca 2.1 4.6 5.9 5.11.41

Lexton 2.5 2.11 3.16 6.25.61

Avoca Goals: Brian Coghlan 2, Rob Astbury 2, Paul Gothard 1.

Avoca Best: Neville Field, Jim Jess, Keith Chiswell, Lance Farnsworth, George Wardlaw.

Jim Jess dominated the club awards, winning the Best & Fairest award, as well as Best Under 20 and Best Under 18.

George Wardlaw was Most determined and Brian Coghlan topped the goal kicking with 69 goals.

The Reserves Best & Fairest award was won by Bruce Farnsworth and the Under 15's by Phillip Holland.

The club awarded Life Memberships to Reg Pora and Frank Kaye, whilst John Field was Best Clubman.

1973



After three inspiring years Terry Long stood down as coach, making way for David Ross, who worked at the National Bank.

Ironically, Terry Long's form was brilliant, but it turned out to be a dismal season for Avoca seniors. Who finished in eighth position.

Terry Long won the club's Best & Fairest award from Keith Chiswell.

Both were selected in the Lexton league side, together with Neville Field and David Ross, who also topped the club's goal kicking with 27 goals.

The Reserves Best & Fairest was a cliffhanger.

Richard Field won on a count-back from Greg Curtis, who also took out the Under 15's Best & Fairest trophy.

Whilst there was little joy for the Bulldog's senior team, it was a memorable year for the Under 15's.

Coached by John Field, the side was undefeated throughout the season and thrashed Moonambel in the Grand Final to win the premiership by 78 points.

UNDER 15 GRAND FINAL

Avoca 12.13.85 to Moonambel 1.1.7

Avoca Goals: N/A

Avoca Best: David Veitch (Capt), Richard Field (V-C), John Jess, Wallace Constable, Wayne Veitch, Dale Templeton, Daryl Stewart, Peter Drummond, Greg Mitchell, Gary Coghlan, Greg Curtis, Brian Holland in an even side.

The Under 15 premiership players were:

Peter Coghlan, Darryl Wardlaw, Brian Holland, Daryl Stewart, Greg Curtis, Gary Coghlan, David Veitch (Capt), Richard Field (V-C), Dale Templeton. Jack Wardlaw, Ken Mitchell, Peter Drummond, Greg Mitchell, John Clohesy, Shane Clohesy, John Jess, Paul Constable, Darren Curtis, Wayne Veitch, Wallace Constable, Peter Blair and Michael Coghlan.

The senior premiership was won by Moonambel who defeated Lexton by 11 points.

[Go to 1974](#)

1974



Over the years bank employees have contributed enormously to the Avoca Football Club, on and off the field.

In 1974 the Manager of the State Bank, Jack D'Arcy, replaced David Ross as coach, but the season was virtually a carbon copy of 1973.

Whilst former coach, Terry Long played superb football and the senior team languished on the bottom of the ladder, the under 15's again cruised through the season undefeated.

Wayne Veitch became the first Avoca player to win the Lexton league Under 15 Best & Fairest award.

He polled a massive 35 votes, and was also selected to play in the Victorian Schoolboy's Championships.

Avoca Under 15's cored a total of 191 goals and 197 behinds for the season, whilst only 18 goals and 15 behinds were recorded against them. Little wonder the percentage was 1188.5%

The young bulldog pups held the opposition scoreless on nine occasions.

Predictably, the Grand Final was a walk over, with Avoca winning by 62 points, giving coach John Field back-to-back premierships and a remarkable record.

UNDER 15 GRAND FINAL

Avoca 3.2 4.5 6.8 9.11.65

Lexton 0.0 0.2 0.2 0.3.3

Avoca Goals: John Jess 3, Dale Templeton 2, Jack Wardlaw 2, Rowan Astbury 1, Paul Constable 1.

Avoca Best: Peter Coghlan, Wayne Veitch, Dale Templeton, Jack Wardlaw, Phillip McKechnie, Daryl Wardlaw, Peter Drummond.

The playing list for the Under 15's was:

Jack Wardlaw (Capt), Wayne Veitch (V-C), John Redpath, Steven Hunter, Peter Blair, Dale Templeton, Darren Curtis, Phillip McKechnie, Michael Coghlan, John Clohesy, John Rainford, Rowan Astbury, John Jess, Peter Coghlan, Shane Clohesy, Lloyd Astbury, Peter Drummond, Paul Constable, Garry Stewart, Wallace Constable, Daryl Wardlaw and Coach, John Field.

Wayne Veitch polled a massive 116 votes in the club's Under 15 Best & Fairest award, winning from Jack Wardlaw and Peter Coghlan.

The seniors Best & Fairest was won by Terry Long from Alan Burge and Keith Chiswell.

Geoff Drummond was Best Under 20 and Robert Rayner was Most Determined.

Coach Jack D'Arcy won the goalkicking award with 42 goals.

Alf Hunter won the Reserves Best & Fairest, as well as being voted Best Clubman.

John Field was made a Life Member, in recognition of outstanding service to the club.

Lexton gained revenge over Moonambel, winning the senior premiership by 37 points.

[go to 1975](#)

1975



After two years in the wilderness, Avoca was determined to re-emerge.

With the support of an enthusiastic committee, President, Ken Field and Secretary, John Field, went on a recruiting drive.

Former top Ballarat League player Greg Dowd was appointed coach.

Also amongst club ranks were four former coach's in Terry Long, Dave Ross, Jack D'Arcy and Bluey Marshall, an ex Maryborough champion ruckman who was persuaded to return to Avoca.

Avoca was also bolstered by several Amphitheatre players when their club disbanded.

The Senior and reserves players list was:

Greg Dowd, David Ross, Terry Long, Keith Chiswell, Brian Coghlan, Gary Coghlan, Jack Wardlaw, Bill Wardlaw, Eddie Wardlaw, George Wardlaw, Bart Clancy, Tony Clancy, John Clohesy, Peter Drummond, Geoff Drummond, Greg Morley, Dean Neil, Rob Hunter, Ray Marshall, Ken Field, David Veitch, Wayne Veitch, Mick McCristal, Robert Rayner, David Bramwell, Allan Murphy, John Evans, Richard Field, Rob Astbury, Leon Bradley, Dale Farnsworth, Michael Barker, Ian Barker, Kevin Matthews, Alf Hunter, Tony Wines, Greg Curtis, Phil Holland, Ron Litchfield, Dale Templeton, Daryl Stewart, Lee Richards, Mick Mahady, Bob Wardlaw, Bernie Turner, David, Brian and Barry Rivett, Garry Lobb, Mark Drummond and Nick Ryker.

Six players were selected in the Lexton league side, including Brian Coghlan, Rob Hunter, Rob Astbury, Geoff Drummond, George Wardlaw and brilliant back flanker, Keith Chiswell.

After Avoca finished fourth on the ladder, they were confident of beating Natte-Bealiba in the first semi final. The Bulldogs led until the last quarter, with Natte getting up by just two points in a thriller.

FIRST SEMI FINAL

Avoca 3.2 8.5 12.9 13.12.90

Natte-Bealiba 2.6 7.7 10.12 13.14.92

Avoca Goals: Brian Coghlan 4, Terry Long 2, Jack D'Arcy 2, George Wardlaw 2, Greg Dowd 1, David Veitch 1, Geoff Drummond 1.

Avoca Best: Terry Long, David Ross, John Evans, Greg Dowd, Ray Marshall, Brian Coghlan.

The Reserves were also eliminated in the First Semi Final, but not before playing a nail biting draw with Navarre.

Avoca led for most of the replay, but Navarre ran out winners by eight points.

RESERVES FIRST SEMI FINAL REPLAY

Avoca 6.2 7.2 9.4 11.5.71

Navarre 3.3 7.6 7.6 12.7.79

Avoca Goals: Wayne Veitch 3, Greg Curtis 2, Tony Clancy 2, Gary Coghlan 1, Mick McCristal 1, Brian Rivett 1, Tony Wines 1.

Avoca Best: Tony Clancy, Wayne Veitch, Daryl Stewart, Greg Morley, Alf Hunter.

Avoca Under 15's were playing for their third consecutive premiership when they took on Navarre in the Grand Final.

In a heart stopper, Navarre clinched the match by just one point.

UNDER 15'S GRAND FINAL

Avoca 2.0 3.1 6.1 8.1.49

Navarre 0.3 3.6 7.7 7.8.50

Avoca Goals: John Jess 6, David Edwards 1, Paul Constable 1.

Avoca Best: John Jess, Peter Blair, Phillip McKechnie, Peter Coghlan,

Rowan Astbury, Paul Constable.

Terry Long was the club's Best & Fairest from Brian Coghlan, but missed out on the Lexton League equivalent by just one vote, beaten by Marnoo's Wayne Jones.

It would have been a fitting finale to a champion player who had given the Bulldogs fantastic service.

Other award winners were Keith Chiswell, Ray Marshall, Rob Hunter, Leon Bradley, Richard Field and Brian Coghlan, who topped the club goal kicking with 37 goals.

The Reserves Best & Fairest was won by Wayne Veitch from Daryl Stewart and Jack Wardlaw.

Wayne Veitch also polled 18 votes to win the Lexton League Reserves Best & Fairest and was only the second Avoca player to do so. Col Evans won the award in 1965.

In the Under 15's Peter Coghlan was voted best player from Phillip McKechnie, Runner Up.

The Best Clubman award was presented to George Murphy.

Former Avoca youngster, Jim Jess won the North Central Football League Best & Fairest whilst playing for St Arnaud.

[go to 1976](#)

1976





AVOCA NETBALL CLUB UNDER 15 TEAM — LEXTON LEAGUE PREMIERS, 1976
Back Row — S. Wardlaw, D. Wines (captain), S. Howell, A. McKeehin, J. Howe,
Centre — S. Veitch, Front Row — G. Jess, M. Constatie (V. captain), H. Blair.

The retirement of former coach's Ray Marshall, David Ross, Jack D'Arcy and the great terry Long created a void in the club's bank of experienced players.

However, former local Gary McKenzie did not hesitate when offered the job of coaching Avoca.

Although the seniors finished fifth, several young players staked a claim for a permanent place in the team, including Geoff and Peter Drummond, Gary Coghlan, Peter Blair, Jack Wardlaw, John Jess and Wayne & David Veitch.

In the Under 15's a pint sized 12 year old kid named David Edwards was starting to turn heads.

Interestingly, it was these and other young locals who would form the nucleus that would soon project the Bulldogs into on the club's most successful era's ever.

However, 1976 was still a case of experience winning through, with 28 year old Brian Coghlan taking out the club's Best & Fairest award from Geoff Drummond, who was also the club's leading goal kicker with 40 goals.

Brian and Geoff also represented Avoca in the Lexton league side, together with George Wardlaw and Allan Wallace.

Brian finished runner up in the Lexton league Best & fairest voting, five votes behind Lexton's Julian Kaye, who polled seven first votes for 21 votes.

It was some consolation for Brian to become the first Avoca player to win the Maffescioni trophy.

Ron Verlin won the Reserves Club Best & Fairest from Greg Morley.

The Reserves were unlucky to be eliminated in the first semi final, losing to Navarre by six points.

RESERVES FIRST SEMI FINAL

Avoca 4.7.31 to Navarre 5.7.37

Avoca Goals: Tony Clancy 2, Tony Wines 1, Ron Evans 1.

Avoca Best: Tony Wines, Keith Johnson, Ron Verlin, Daryl Stewart, Phil McKechnie, Michael Barker.

It was a marvelous season for Phil McKechnie in the Under 15's.

During the season he played with Ballarat in the Victorian Schoolboys Championships and won Avoca Under 15's Best & fairest award.

He came within three votes of winning the Lexton league equivalent, beaten by Landsborough's Andrew Murphy.

Avoca Under 15's played off in the Grand Final, but were no match for Landsborough, going down by 75 points, which was a very disappointing loss as the Bulldogs were considered to be favourites.

UNDER 15 GRAND FINAL

Avoca 1.5 1.6 1.10 2.11.23

Landsborough 3.2 8.6 12.7 15.8.98

Avoca Goals: Lloyd Astbury 1, Wallace Constable 1.

Avoca Best: Daryl Wardlaw, Rowan Astbury, Darren Curtis, Phil McKechnie

Mick Matthews was voted Best Clubman.

The senior grand final between Lexton and Natte-Bealiba, was one of the most sensational ever.

With the scores level, a Lexton player marked the ball 60 metres from goal on an acute angle.

The siren then sounded and the cool Lexton player proceeded to kick true for a thrilling six point victory.

[go to 1977](#)

1977

The 1977 season started disastrously for Avoca.

On the eve of the first game, an appeal to win a clearance from St Arnaud for new coach, Kevin Adams, was refused.

Former Maryborough District League footballer, Bob "Fiddle" Evans, a Telecom technician, took over the reins.

Although Avoca finished fifth, the club continued with its policy to blood promising young players.

Geoff Drummond became the second Avoca footballer to win the Maffescioni award and was also the club's leading goalkicker with 35 goals.

Former Avoca player and all time champion, Ron Field, returned home and won the club Best & Fairest award, edging out Geoff Drummond.

Other award winners included Dale Templeton, Michael Barker, Wayne Veitch Best Under 20, and Peter Drummond Best Under 18.

The Best Clubman award went to Kevin Matthews, who has continued to serve the club loyally over the years.

Following a count-back, Keith Johnson won the Reserves Best & fairest award from Bruce Farnsworth.

Keith was not so fortunate in the Lexton league equivalent, finishing runner up to Lexton's Garry Sargent.

The Reserves season ended after losing the first semi final to Lexton by 24 points.

RESERVES FIRST SEMI FINAL

| | | | | |
|--------|-----|-----|------|----------|
| Avoca | 1.0 | 4.1 | 7.1 | 9.4.58 |
| Lexton | 2.4 | 5.7 | 9.13 | 11.16.82 |

Avoca Goals: Keith Johnson 2, Wallace Constable 2, Leon Bradley 2, Daryl Stewart 1, Phil Dridan 1, Bruce Farnsworth 1.

Avoca Best: Robert Rayner, Mick Mahady, Leon Bradley, Greg Curtis, Greg Thompson, Keith Johnson.

Meanwhile it was a memorable year for the Under 15's.

Coached by Jon Howell, the young Bulldogs were undefeated during the season, but had to come from behind to win the Grand Final, defeating Navarre by two points.

UNDER 15 GRAND FINAL

Avoca 0.2 3.3 5.7 8.8.56

Navarre 2.5 3.7 6.10 7.12.54

Avoca Goals: Paul Constable 4, Darren Curtis 3, Shane Clohesy 1.

Avoca Best: Wayde Thiele, Michael Coghlan, Paul Constable, Darren Curtis, Gary Stewart, Jack Dridan.

The Under 15 premiership players were:

Wallace Constable, Jack Dridan, Greg Jess, John Webb, Craig Trickey, Kevin Holland, Darren Curtis, Garry Stewart, Roger Jolly, John Rainford, Geoff Hunter, Wayde Thiele, Shane Clohesy, Graham Howell, Paul Constable, Rowan Astbury, David Edwards, Scott Penrice, Steven Hunter, Brendan Jolly, Gavin Clohesy, Peter Constable, Michael Coghlan, and Coach Jon Howell.

Paul Constable won the Under 15's Best & Fairest award, with Rowan Astbury Runner Up.

Paul Constable kicked 14 out of the 24 goals scored during the final series.

In the seniors, Natte-Bealiba continued to be frustrated in its attempts to win a premiership, losing to Navarre by two points.

[go to 1978](#)

1978

On reflection, the Education Department was indirectly responsible for the revival Avoca eventually underwent at the turn of the decade.

For many years, Geoff Calder, a school teacher, had given Natte-Bealiba outstanding service.

When he came to work and live in Avoca in 1978, his football loyalties also transferred.

Although he was classed as a good reserves footballer, it soon became obvious his expertise was administration.

Although he did not become an official until the following year, it was 1978 when Geoff started work on a recruiting blueprint that would ultimately build Avoca into a football power.

Geoff played a key role in enticing several top young players from Ballarat Teachers College.

But the boldest move was the signing of Dennis Ross, one of Natte-Bealiba's first sons, as Coach.

Others recruited included student teachers Tony Haddow – Rochester, Gerard Darcy – Donald, and Bruce Sartori – Horsham Imperials, Ray Martin, the son of former Coach, Max Martin, was recruited from Primrose whilst top Dunolly footballers, Mick Spencer and Ron Deledio were amongst the new faces.

Deledio, who worked at the National Bank, was appointed assistant coach.

The Senior and reserves players list was: Richard Field, Robert Rayner, Keith Johnson, Tony Wines, Dale Templeton, Peter Blair, Phillip McKechnie, Brian Coghlan, John Evans, Peter Drummond, Kevin Matthews, Victor Jenkins, Geoff Drummond, John Jess, Peter Coghlan, Leon Bradley, Lloyd and Rowan Astbury, Ross Dawson, Ron Deledio, John Dridan, Dennis Ross, David Bramwell, Tony Haddow, Wallace Constable, Darren Curtis, Bob Evans, Ron Field, Pat Harrison, Greg Thompson, Michael Barker, Garry McArdle, Phonse Liddle, Gerard Darcy, Mick Pickett, Bruce Sartori, John Clohesy, Wayne Veitch, Phillip Dridan, Lee Richards, Geoff Hunter, John Wallace, Paul Constable, Gerald Meagher, Greg Morley, Bob Pora, Daryl Wardlaw and Geoff Calder.

After being on top of the ladder all season, Avoca lost the last match and were relegated to third position and played in the first semi final against Moonambel.

Avoca led throughout to win the match by 28 points.

FIRST SEMI FINAL

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|-----------|------|------|-------|-----------|
| Avoca | 4.3 | 8.10 | 11.11 | 17.14.116 |
| Moonambel | 3.10 | 5.15 | 9.20 | 11.22.88 |

Avoca Goals: Geoff Drummond 3, Gerard Darcy 3, Brian Coghlan 2, Victor Jenkins 2, Wayne Veitch 2, Dennis Ross 2, Tony Haddow 1, John Evans 1, George Wardlaw 1.

Avoca Best: Ron Field, Victor Jenkins, Dennis Ross, Brian Coghlan, Leon Bradley.

Despite losing to Navarre by 32 points in the preliminary final, Avoca's young players gained invaluable experience.

PRELIMINARY FINAL

Avoca 6.3 9.4 14.9 18.13.121

Navarre 4.1 9.11 14.14 23.15.153

Avoca Goals: Gerard Darcy 6, Dennis Ross 3, Peter Blair 3, Brian Coghlan 2, Wayne Veitch 2, Geoff Drummond 1, Tony Haddow 1.

Avoca Best: Ron Field, Wayne Veitch, Leon Bradley, Ray Martin, Dennis Ross, Gerard Darcy.

It was a similar story in the Reserves and Under 15's with Avoca being beaten in their respective Preliminary finals.

RESERVES PRELIMINARY FINAL

Avoca 7.7.49 to Navarre 9.7.61

Avoca Goals: Keith Johnson 3, Darren Curtis 2, Tony Wines 1, Geoff Calder 1.

Avoca Best: Dale Templeton, Bruce Farnsworth, Tony Wines, Peter Coghlan, Keith Johnson.

UNDER 15 PRELIMINARY FINAL

Avoca 4.2.26 to Lexton 12.11.83

Avoca Goals: Greg Jess 2, David Edwards 1, Peter Constable 1.

Avoca Best: Wayde Thiele, Craig Trickey, Greg Jess, Gavin Clohesy, David Edwards.

Veteran Ron Field won the Senior Best & Fairest award from Wayne Veitch.

Tony Haddow was Best Under 20 and Phillip McKechnie Best Under 18.

With 38 goals, Brian Coghlan topped Avoca's goal kicking for the fifth time, before bringing down the curtain on a brilliant career at the age of 30 years.

The Reserves Best & Fairest winner was Dale Templeton from Daryl Wardlaw.

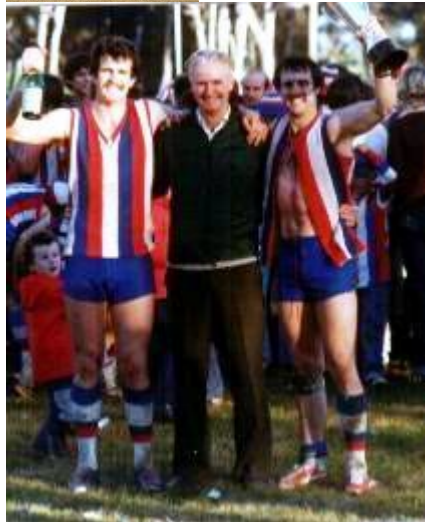
Wayde Thiele was the Under 15 Best & fairest and Greg Jess was Runner Up.

David Bramwell was voted Best Clubman.

The seniors premiership was won by Lexton who defeated Navarre.

[go to 1979](#)

1979 R/Up



Season 1979

Seniors - Runners Up

Reserves - Premiers

Under 16's - 4th

By 1979 Avoca had experienced a premiership drought that stretched 26 years.

There had been many periods of great expectation, but none realized the coveted senior premiership pennant.

The destiny of the Avoca Football Club was now clearly in the hands of Secretary Geoff Calder.

If the senior team failed to deliver yet again, there was grave danger that supporters and sponsors would lose faith, thus plunging the club into the depths of despair.

At the Annual Meeting, Ken Beavis was elected President, and immediately endorsed the work carried out by Geoff Calder the previous season, and also Phonse Liddle, who was an excellent Secretary.

This gave Geoff the confidence to continue his quest to conquer mountains.

[Ron Deledio](#) was appointed Coach, which proved a shrewd move, because it also attracted [Wayne and Ron Deledio senior](#) to the club.

Wayne, a school teacher at Redbank, was a former Carlton player, and ready made bush champion, whilst Ron senior was a highly respected and renowned for his astute football brain.

The coach also accepted the role of Treasurer, but was assisted by his wife, Patricia.

The aggressive recruiting program from 1978 continued, yielding Ken Kay, Mick King, Ron Saw, Barry Baker, Kerri Lythgo, and Eddie Miller.

Enthusiasm swept through the club like never before, with all three Avoca grades qualifying for the final series.

The senior team finished on top of the ladder and scored a comfortable 24 point victory over Moonambel in the second semi final.

2nd Semi Final

| | | | | |
|-----------|-----|------|-------|-----------|
| Avoca | 5.3 | 10.6 | 18.9 | 24.13.157 |
| Moonambel | 4.4 | 8.10 | 12.13 | 19.19.133 |

Best: Ken Kay, Peter Blair, Wayne Deledio, Victor Jenkins,
Geoff Drummond, Tony Haddow.

Goals: Ken Kay 6, Geoff Drummond 5, Richard Field 3,
Tony Haddow 3, Peter Blair 2, Wayne Deledio 1,
Ron Deledio 1, Victor Jenkins 1, Gerard Darcy 1,
Wayne Veitch 1.

The week's rest did little to help Avoca, with Moonambel leading for most of the Grand Final and eventually winning the premiership by 27 points.

Grand Final

| | | | | |
|-----------|-----|------|-------|-----------|
| Avoca | 3.5 | 11.5 | 11.8 | 17.13.115 |
| Moonambel | 8.2 | 11.5 | 19.15 | 21.16.142 |

Best: Wayne Veitch, Leon Bradley, Wally Constable, Ron Deledio,
Wayne Deledio.

Goals: Wayne Veitch 6, Wayne Deledio 3, Richard Field 2,
Gerard Darcy 2, John Jess 1, Tony Haddow 1, Eddie
Miller 1.
Ken Kay 1??.

Avoca Reserves coached by John Field and Captained by Stuart Sutter, were ultimately triumphant, but caused some hearts to flutter along the journey.

Trailing Moonambel by two points in the second semi final, Wayde Thiele marked the ball 60 metres out on the boundary.

Despite the final siren ringing in his ears, Wayde remained ice cool as he unleashed a massive kick which split the goal posts, giving Avoca victory by four points.

Reserves 2nd Semi Final

| | | | | |
|-----------|-----|-----|-------|----------|
| Avoca | 4.2 | 7.3 | 10.3 | 15.6.96 |
| Moonambel | 3.3 | 8.8 | 11.10 | 13.14.92 |

Best: Geoff Calder, Jack Wardlaw, Lloyd Astbury, Dale Templeton,
Wayde Thiele.

Goals: ?????

The Grand Final against Lexton was also a tense affair.

Despite inaccuracy, Avoca won the match by four points.

Reserves Grand Final

| | | | | |
|--------|--|--|--|---------|
| Avoca | | | | 7.18.60 |
| Lexton | | | | 8.8.56 |

Best: Stuart Sutter, Geoff Collins, Geoff Calder, Peter Coghlan,
Dale Templeton,

Goals: Stuart Sutter 6, ??????

This was the first time Avoca has won a Reserves Grade
Premiership since 1962.

Although Avoca Under 16's were eliminated by Navarre in the first semi final, the team contained young players who would soon emerge to play a significant role in shaping the club's destiny.

Even though the premiership proved elusive in 1979, [Wayne Deledio](#) brought honour to the club and himself by winning the Lexton League Best & Fairest award.

Wayne polled 27 votes, 14 clear of his nearest rival.

He also won the Maffescioni Award and the club's Best & Fairest Trophy.

Reserves captain, Stuart Sutter, received the club's Best & Fairest award, whilst Craig Trickey was the top vote getter for the Under 16's.

Life Memberships were presented to two of the most popular and hard working identities, Gwen Matthews and her husband, Mick.

Appropriately, Geoff Calder received the award for Best Clubman.

[go to 1980](#)