



## **DEVERY – KELLY MEDAL MAFC BEST & FAIREST 2019 A MESSAGE FROM TERRY DEVERY**



Congratulations to the winner of the Devery/Kelly Medal for the MAFC Best & Fairest for 2019.

I also wish to thank Stephen Dalziel for representing me this evening and for Mike Mollison's offer to write a few words about Morningside.

The Devery part of the jointly named Medal does not recognize Terry Devery the person; rather it identifies a period of 1961 to 1965. It was the period when Morningside emerged as a power in the QAFL.

It was a long time ago, more than 50 years – so very few here tonight at the Gabba, a ground where Morningside played most of their football, would know or be aware of how it was “way back then”.

Please indulge an old footballer's reminisces for they form the basis of what this Medal stands for.

In the period 1961-1965 there were 8 senior clubs in the QAFL, one in the Western Suburbs, 7 in the Northern Suburbs and 2 Southside, Coorparoo and Morningside.

The Northern clubs regarded themselves as the dominating force of the competition as they included the formation clubs. At that time the Mayne Football Club were regarded as the team to beat, they had their own home ground Perry Park, and with the Gabba were the two main grounds on which the four fixtures were played each weekend.

Mayne's domination was initially challenged by Coorparoo who supported by strong financial patrons, recruited outstanding local and interstate players. Dick Verdon from Sandgate, QAFL Legend and Brian Gleeson St Kilda Brownlow Medallist are just two that come to mind.

It should be noted that during this time there was an embargo set down by the Australian National Football Council limiting local Queensland players being recruited by the VFL. From time to time the embargo was ignored, example Ken Grimley from Wilston Grange to Fitzroy. In his first game Grimley kicked 6 goals, but after a short stay returned to Brisbane where surprise, surprise he joined Coorparoo.

The point that I am making as a consequence of the embargo there were very good footballers playing in the QAFL, it was a strong competition. Furthermore clubs like Mayne and Coorparoo enjoying strong financial support recruited well and were the teams to beat. In 1960-61 Morningside were the baby of the competition and in the eyes of many were there to make up the numbers, nobody wanted a bye.

Ignored by the Philistines things were happening at Morningside. The Club situated at Hawthorne Park was squeezed between the cycling track, the venue of the Australian Track Championships in 1963, and a Rugby League ground adjacent to Riding Road.

The multi use club house was an old Army Barracks building, standing on timber stumps. It served as change rooms, committee rooms, there were showers, serviced by a temperamental gas hot water service. Wooden shutters covered the window openings, entrance was by wooden stairs leading to well worn double doors. The old shed was not much to look at; but from within there was a strong heartbeat that attracted aspiring footballers and volunteers.

The Club with assistance from the Australian National Football Council employed a full time Schools Coach. The schools coach attended schools within the general area, supporting the strong Australian Rules Competition amongst Primary, Secondary and Catholic Schools.

As a consequence Morningside Juniors were strong both in numbers and in ability. In addition the demise of the Yeronga Football Club saw a number of young talented players transfer to Morningside. All this was in place when I arrived during the 1961 season, appointed to the coaching position in 1962 it was apparent that we had the capacity and the capability to be very competitive.

But we needed to believe.

A winning culture emerged during 1962, when we made a late but unsuccessful run for the Finals. Nonetheless it was the best result that the Club had achieved and had announced Morningside as an emerging power. The Club had terrific volunteers and a fervent and demonstrative supporter base. It brought colour to local games that had not been previously seen in the QAFL.

The following two years the Club were Preliminary Finalists, some still argue that the 1963 side, premiership aspirations shredded by a swathe of injuries on the eve of the finals was the best side of that era.

The Club knowing that it could produce football to beat the best was not satisfied with being just close, There was a collective will and understanding from the committee, the players from the ones, the two's and under seventeens that together we would take the next step in 1965.

Consequently, Morningside were not to be denied and were rewarded with the Clubs first premierships in the Firsts and Seconds.

In those five years there was a collective effort by all to achieve something unique, be part of something special. I can still remember saying to the players before the Grand Final, that we would be the first, there would be others but we would be the first. We would join committee members, volunteers, supporters and all players in establishing the foundations for Morningside to become a dominant and lasting force in Queensland Football.

I was privileged and proud to be part of it, now more than half a century later Morningside continues.

That is what the 'Devery' part of this medal stands for.

