

# **Neil Davey (Bennettswood; East Burwood-Bennettswood; East Burwood; BHRDCA) – late 1970's to present**

*Contributed by Peter White*

Every club probably has a Neil Davey type person, but few would have one who has achieved so much on and off the field with both club and association. Still playing and contributing at the age of 55, Neil's career spanning more than 35 years firstly with Bennettswood and then the merged club with East Burwood has to be admired by even the most fervent competitor.

Neil's career in the BHRDCA started in the late 1970's when he transferred from his Mount Waverley junior club to the seniors at Bennettswood starting a long and illustrious career as player, captain, coach and administrator. Immediately entrenching himself as a leading batsman in an up and coming young team, Neil or more affectionately known as "Muppet" (a nickname given to him by an aspiring VFL footballer at the time in Peter Schwab) was an integral part in Bennettswood's rise from B Grade to Shield Grade in the space of a few years. Some may say playing alongside Frank Horne and Mark ("Perc") Jones meant he had an armchair ride, but the truth is that he was a leading batsman making many runs and occupying the crease for long spells paving the way for Frank and Perc to weave their own magic.

B Grade premiership honours in 1980/81 were followed quickly by an A Grade premiership in 1984/85 and then the club's first Shield premiership in 1988/89. Following the merger with East Burwood, he captained the seconds to the Shield II premiership in 1993/94 and the thirds to the B1 premiership in 1997-98 in addition to playing in many finals campaigns.

Neil has played well over 400 senior games now making numerous centuries, winning countless team batting averages as well as winning a couple of association batting averages along the way. Most players would strive to have one or two of these achievements let alone all to have a record of all of these.

Off the field Muppet started coaching juniors in the early 1980's and continued to do so until last season. Over 30 years he nurtured young cricketers, many of whom went on and played countless games of senior cricket in the club's various elevens. It took some time for one of his junior teams to win a premiership which was more indicative of his team approach to give every player a go at the expense of winning at all costs. The Under 12C team did it for him in 2006-07 and the Under 14C team in 2011-12.

In the last year of the Bennettswood Cricket Club prior to the merger, Muppet took on the Secretary's role which he continued for the first 15 years of the merged club. After that he was Assistant Secretary for two years mentoring his young replacement then Vice President for ~~2~~ two years. Before and after these stints he was also "just" a committeeman. Neil has been awarded countless Best Clubman awards for the huge efforts and sacrifices he has made which signify the contributions he has made for the club, both on and off the field. He was awarded Life Membership in 1992 whilst still at Bennettswood which signifies the amount of work he was doing back then before the mountain of work he undertook at the merged club.

As if he did not have that much on his plate, Neil took on the Association's Treasurer role for nine years helping turning around an Association that had little funds and assets into a profitable and financial organisation. Also he decided that taking on the association Junior Co-ordinator's role for 2 years would also fill in some time as well.

Neil was awarded the Tim Moore Award for contribution to association junior cricket and Life Membership of the BHRDCA in 2007. There is not much left for Muppet to achieve or to be awarded; though a Shield premiership at East Burwood would be something that he would love to see.

Neil "Muppet" Davey: a credit to Bennettswood, East Burwood and the BHRDCA and a magnificent cricketer, competitor, coach and administrator.