

Glebe District Hockey Club

Life Membership Biography

Danny O'Brien

Elected GDHC Life Member November 2008

Born 8th of April 1962

At the 2008 Glebe District Hockey Club Annual General Meeting held at the Toxteth Hotel Glebe, on 26 November 2008, Danny O'Brien was unanimously elected a Life Member of the Club.

The GDHC distributed phone books around Balmain as a fundraising measure during the late 70's early 80's. The Club lost the contract when Danny overarmed a few books which landed in well-concealed backyard pools. Residents, lacking the Glebe sense of humor complained and that was that - Glebe lost the contract.

Danny was born at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital Camperdown in 1962 to John Thomas O'Brien & Betty Olive O'Brien (Nee Hudson). Having been born and raised in the Glebe area Danny began his formal education at St James Primary School Forest Lodge in 1967 - 1972; Danny was a keen student who enjoyed all sports however hockey was his real passion. Danny O'Brien's career with the Club started in 1969 when he played in the Under 10 team from Saint James' Catholic School Forest Lodge. Danny's junior Hockey days were heavily influenced by John Cowan who introduced the sport to St James School. Jonny Cowan the father of club larrikin Tony Cowan was a distance runner of some note and was one of the best trainers



the club has ever had. Jonny used to take a merry band of students down to Jubilee oval of a Friday afternoon for a hit and game.

Interestingly, the Founder of the Glebe District Hockey Club was an Irish Patrician Brother called Macartan Keegan who taught at Saint James. Macartan Keegan was captain coach of the first team fielded by the Club in 1931.

After finishing his primary school education with St James he then progressed on to Christian Brothers Balmain 1973, which at the time was a boys school from years 5 – 10. The School was located at Thames Street Balmain which was founded by the Christian Brothers in 1887 but subsequently closed down in 1990. The site of the old school is currently occupied by the Christian Brothers Provincial administration department.

Danny After completing his junior High School days in (1977) then progressed on to Holy Cross College Ryde situated on Victoria Rd 78 - 79. After completing his senior schooling years Danny Completed a Certificate IV Management Course - did Accountancy at TAFE which enabled him to be employed at Westpac bank. Danny did note that whilst studying at TAFE his love and passion for hockey often kept getting in the way of his studies.

Danny O'Brien and the GDHC

Danny's career with the GDHC begun in 1969, his team was coached by Club Life Member Bill Stubbs (561 Club Games) and Victor Westacott (629 Club Games) and included Victor Ferrari, Brian Bissaker, Stephen Grelish, Peter Rizzardini, Raymond Greate, Gerard Britton, Peter McQuade, Anthony Yarnold, Martin Marshman, Max Gorbach and Milan Pletersky.

Danny won several premierships with Glebe junior teams and represented the State in the NSW Under 16 team in 1978, together with other Glebe players Mark Edwards, Colin Rochester and Craig Stubbs.

Danny progressed to the Glebe seniors in 1977. He played in the 1977 premiership winning sixth grade team captained by his Under 10 coach Bill Stubbs. Other players in this team were Craig Stubbs, Bruce Pink, Michael Gilfeather, Colin Rochester, Colin Smith, Alan Chu, Ken Wark, Graham Shirley, Bennett Dunn, Peter McQuade and Brian Bissaker.

In 1981 Danny played in the premiership winning Glebe second grade team. Players in this team were Royce Jenkins, George Manou, Colin Rochester, Craig Stubbs, Gary Wark, Danny O'Brien, Harry Wark (Jnr), Henry Lysaght, Tony Cowan, Craig McPhee, Pat Diviney, Mark Gersback and Jason Hughes.

In 1982 Danny played in the premiership winning Glebe first grade team. This was Danny's debut season in the Glebe 1st grade team, which he lists as one of his highlights whilst playing for Glebe. Players in this team were Geoff Paterson (captain), Craig Stubbs, Keith Pritchard, Ian

Mutton, George Manou, Colin Rochester, Danny O'Brien, Warren "Buster" Birmingham, Henry Lysaght, Ken Wark (Jnr) and Les Wark. Once again Danny's team was coached by his former Under 10 coach Bill Stubbs. He continued to play first grade until the end of the 1989 season.

In 1990 Danny played in the premiership winning third grade team, and has won a total of 5 lower grade premierships after moving back through the grades. His last premiership was in 2004 with the fourth grade team. Players who played with Danny in the 2004 fourth grade team were Alex Crook, Dean McWhinney, Scott Howard, Tom Holyoak, Les Wark, Tim Sutton, Leo Kalisperis, Adam Farrawell, Adam Turnbull, Andrew Goodrick, Graeme Brown, David Price, Joost Dudock, Greg Evans, Nathan Dart and Colin Rochester.

It is interesting to note that Danny and Les Wark played together in the 1982 premiership winning Glebe first grade team, and played together 22 years later to win the 2004 fourth grade premiership.

As a player Danny has made a significant contribution to the Club. He has won premierships in first, second, third, fourth and sixth grades. Up until the end of the 2012 season Danny had played over 600 senior games for Glebe. In 2012 Danny took a break from playing and has since continued his secretary roll for the Club and also taken on the task of 1st grade team manager.

As an administrator Danny has been a major contributor to Club affairs for over 25 years. He was Secretary of the Club six times, in 1982 and 1983, and from 1988-1991. At the 2008 Annual General Meeting he was elected Secretary for the 2009 season. In 1986 he was Club President and has been Club Captain on six occasions, in 1985, in 2000 and 2001, and from 2006-2008. Danny has been the only Club Member in the 78 year history of the Club to have held the three positions of President, Secretary and Club Captain. Fred Letts, another Life Member of the Club is the only person to have held the three positions of President, Secretary and Treasurer.

Danny has been a junior coach, off and on for 30 years, and in 2008 he coached the second grade women's team in which he coached his daughter Kristen.

Danny is ably supported in his work for the Club by his loyal partner Donna with whom he has been with for the better part of 20 years whilst helping to raise Donna's two children Andrew and Kristen. Andrew Crawford played hockey for the Club during the 1990's and went by the nickname of snowy due to his blonde hair. Kristen also played some junior hockey for the club and in 2008 played in the Women's 2nd grade side coached by Danny. Andrew is now living in Queensland and enjoys his fishing whilst Kristen is completing her University Studies in Bathurst at The Charles Stuart University.

On the employment front Danny worked in the banking industry for 16 years before switching to sales and marketing, where he has spent the last 11 years. Danny is a good salesman, which is why the 200 Club fund raiser organised by him in recent years, has been such a great success.

Geoff Paterson wrote in his letter to the Management Committee, recommending Danny for Life Membership:

"Danny's long time commitment to the Club and his attitude to take on positions when the Club most needed it is a fine example to other Members. His philosophy has always been to think of what he can do for the Club, and not what the Club can do for Danny.

He has been a mentor and wise counsel to many people. Danny is an efficient administrator, a tireless worker and has run the 200 CLUB fund raiser for the past 4 seasons. He has coached junior teams, men's teams and women's teams, and at some time or other has been involved in every facet of the Glebe District Hockey Club. Danny has been a great supporter of the Club and its Members.

I can remember in the 70's seeing Danny as a young boy sitting atop the change sheds at Federal Park Annandale watching the first grade home games on a Saturday afternoon.

Danny's advice to current day administrators and club members are this: Always put the club first and don't let various agendas get in the way. Work together as a team as a committee and it will be much more enjoyable. Get to know all the members and actively involve them in all aspects of the club. Also do the job because you love it and the club. He also included his highlights whilst associated with the club as coaching various junior and senior teams and being on the club's committee for just on 10 years.

Danny has become part of the folklore of the Club and deservedly earned the recognition to be inducted as the 27th Life Member of this great Club of ours.

Club Members and Supporters congratulate Danny on achieving Life Membership status. By any measure the award is justly deserved.