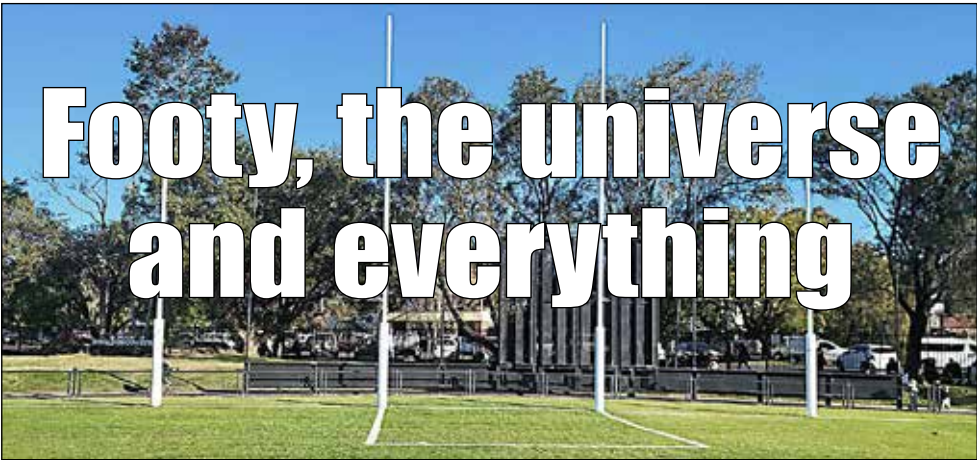




Footy, the universe and everything

by James Alexander

Before the advent of the AFL competition in the early 1980s, the Victoria-based VFL was the country's premier Aussie Rules Football league.

While most of the land (Tasmania, SA, WA and the NT) were as nuts about Aussie Rules as Victoria, the great cultural divide with the rugby states (Qld and NSW) was evident along the Barassi Line, which crept further into southern NSW than the actual state border.

A road trip through country Qld and NSW would see town after town of rugby posts, until somewhere around Corowa, the iconic four posts of Aussie Rules fields become prominent. Travelling Victorians would relax and rejoice at seeing their familiar goal and point posts; Queenslanders and New South Welshers would feel they were entering hostile territory.

Since the game went national in the 1980s, as did Rugby League, all that is now history. Close to 50% of Australians now support an AFL club, and this is no longer dictated by geography. Why does this brand of football resonate so deeply with so many of us?

Sociologist Robert Pascoe wrote about the political and philosophical spirit of the times with the mid-19th century settler countries emphasising and

romanticising the freedom of the individual (as opposed to the earlier cultural restrictions of class-stratified Britain and Europe, which promoted a 'natural order' of restrictions on social mobility).

The games created in this era, like Aussie Rules footy here and baseball in America, reflected a rejection of the rules and restrictions of the old world and embracing an ethos of social freedom.

As an example, our game deliberately involved no off-side rule, giving players the freedom to run wherever they wanted – a major difference to both rugby and soccer.

This resonated with the Australian psyche when Aussie Rules footy was created in 1858 – only four years after the Eureka Stockade saw miners from all over the world challenge the Crown for a fair go. It was the cultural milieu which our own Robin Hood, Ned Kelly was born into.

As a people, we embraced notions of egalitarianism and the fair go, even if this was more in theory than in reality. Today, Australian Rules Football is a fast-moving game which balances individual flair, freedom of movement and team work to still demonstrate that ethos – and we love it because it reflects who we like to think we are.

Locally, the Nimbin Demons have just completed their second season in the resurrected Northern Rivers

AFL competition, in which every game was a close contest. We went from the bottom of the ladder in 2025 to finishing this season 3rd on the ladder. It has been a fantastic achievement and testimony to the passion of the coach, the committee and the players – a genuine community of enthusiasts working together with shared purpose.

Our success also reflects the support of the Nimbin community, with many individuals, businesses and organisations offering sponsorships over the season. More than just a football club, the Demons reflect the genuine and unique culture of Nimbin, with many viewing it as being more a men's group (focused around footy) than just a sporting club.

In a highly supportive club culture, people are held accountable to do better, to take responsibility and to be their best version for something bigger than them.

Going forward, we hope to field several teams in the AFL9s competition starting in Spring. This is a non-contact version of modified Aussie Rules on a smaller field with nine players on each side, three of which must be women.

It is a great opportunity for women lovers of footy to get involved and develop skills as a stepping stone to our long-term vision of fielding a full She-Demons team in the future.

We are currently developing ideas around another Gaelic football challenge to the Nimbin Headers later in the year, with the possibility of opening the day up to several games between other Aussie Rules teams of the area and their soccer teams.

We are also looking at the Demons entering a trial in the local village social cricket competition over summer, as a trial for entry into the more serious competition in the future.

And finally, we are looking forward to further eroding the Barassi Line with professional goal posts implanted in our own field in Nimbin – an iconic symbol of our national identity and the Demon spirit which has survived the decades in this most unusual town of ours.

For more details, contact club President and Coach Tony on 0476-037-492, or Secretary James on 0410-836-690.

Headers player interview

with Stevie Wappett



How long have you been playing soccer and where did it start?

I've only been playing soccer since the start of the 2026 season! I did play one year when I was 8 years old, but I could not for the life of me figure out how to kick the ball while running, so I got into netball.

Over the last 10 years or so, the sport I have been playing the most is ultimate frisbee.

How did you end up playing for the Headers?

About two years ago Lucia Schulz asked if I would be keen to play keeper knowing that I had played a lot of frisbee and wasn't a bad catch. I said no, having some fear from grade four still lingering. Then two years later, I was asked again by Gen Payne at the pub from an off-hand curious question about how their season was going so far.

The timing was perfect this time around. I was needing a challenge to spice things up.

Asides from a win, what makes a good game?

For me, a good game is a proper warm up, some pre and post-game laughs and some encouragement from the girls. I'm still learning, and it's so great to have support whether that be tips on what I'm doing right, what I could improve on, or my favourite - that I just pulled something off that was impressive.

What's something that you've learned from soccer that applies to life off the field?

Soccer teaches you that there is reward after hard work. I was so nervous coming to my first training, and I did what I was most scared of – I fell over in front of everyone first exercise. But I got up and no one bat an eye lid. It was just part of the game.

I put in effort to try something new, and I've surprised myself with what I've been able to do. You really can learn a new skill at any time of life.

What's your favourite post-game meal?

Sunday night dinner at the folks!

What position do you play and what is your position's role?

I play keeper, so it's my role is to keep the damn ball out of the net! I'm learning how to be an aggressive keeper at the minute, how to run out towards strikers that break through defence, and to remember to not only catch but to kick, punch, knee and shield the ball in whatever way necessary.

Next thing to get a handle on is the on-ground goal kicks.

How do you manage pre-game nerves?

Usually I wind myself up on the drive there, tense jawed and shaky legged. But once I am on the field, I unwind by laughing

with the team and looking around at the beautiful landscape and birds and young kids playing with their soccer balls. People are just happy to be outside cheering on people and that spirit really calms the nerves.

If you could have any superpower on the pitch, what would it be?

To not let a single goal in. To have a powerful goal kick. To be able to hold on to every ball that I save. I've had a few balls go passed me that I've stopped but I've failed to secure. But these will take practice and I feel like I can get better with a bit of hard work.

What do you think makes a good team player?

A good team player is someone who is supportive and communicative, not only with teammates but opponents. It's a beautiful thing to witness the girls on the field speaking politely with the person they are marking or helping them up if they get knocked over.

It really changes the enjoyment of the game when everyone has a good balance of competition and play.

What is the best part of being apart of the Headers?

The best part is definitely the community. I grew up around the area, but I've been living in the city for almost a decade, and I live alone. It's been so nice to reconnect with old friends, make new friends, and be a part of something people genuinely enjoy being part of.

Everyone is passionate about soccer and interested in each other's lives. It's so nice to be accepted so effortlessly by such wonderful people. Up the Champs!

What has your favourite experience been on the field this season?

It would have to be the last game we played against Mullumbimby. It was a tough but enjoyable game, and we came out only losing 1-0, and I saved a few goals including a few corners. The third corner I had jumped up to catch but its force was strong, so I palmed it away, only for a Mullum player to head it toward the goal. Like it was in slow motion, I followed the ball with my eyes, and they fell on Gen who next to me headed the ball out.

The crowd went wild. It was a great save and a really good example of the teamwork present in our team.



nimbin.goodtimes@gmail.com



NSW rental shortage continues to challenge local communities

The rental shortage across New South Wales continues to place enormous pressure on tenants, landlords and property managers alike.

Demand for quality rental homes has reached unprecedented levels, leaving many families, workers, retirees and local residents struggling to find suitable accommodation.

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At Nimbin Hills Real Estate and Hills2Coast Real Estate, our Property Management Team is working with an ever-growing list of qualified tenants who are ready to move immediately. These are tenants who have excellent references, stable rental histories and are eager to secure long-term homes.

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More importantly, every property made available for rent helps ease the housing shortage affecting our communities and provides local people with a place to call home.



Suzy Moody



Vicki Morgan

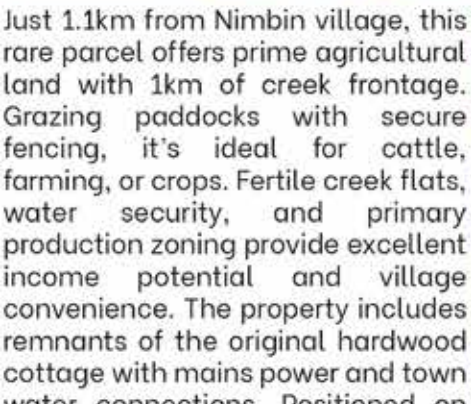
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3 1 2 2.71 ha

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3 2 1 36 Acres

\$: Contact Agent Agent: Samara



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\$: Contact Agent Agent: Samara



Warby Road, Jiggi

5 3 5 13.63 ha

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\$370,000 Agent: Jacqui



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\$: Contact Agent Agent: Samara



162 Blue Knob Road, Nimbin

3 1 1 9.8 Acres

\$: Contact Agent Agents: John & Michelle



Blue Knob Road, Blue Knob

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\$: Contact Agent Agents: John & Michelle



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2 2 1

\$: Contact Agent Agent: Vicki



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