

ROLE MODELS

This weekend when you go to your local or NAB League football game, I ask you to do one thing for me. I ask you to take a look around at the young children kicking the footballs on the ground during the 1/4, 1/2- and 3/4-time breaks. Have a look at how they are dressed, what number they may be wearing on the back of their football jumpers, how they kick a football, what name they yell out if they take a speccy or kick a goal. Or even as simple as what haircut they have! Who are they trying to emulate? And why?



A role model is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as: "a person looked to by others as an example to be imitated". Role Models can shape the way we act, the way we dress, shape the way we play football, shape the way we live our lives and can shape our character. They don't have to play sport they can be a fine upstanding person within your community, they don't have to be someone of recognition – a role model is someone that you just look up to and inspires you to lead a meaningful life.

When you were a young boy or girl who were your role models? What posters adorned your bedroom walls? Right at this very minute other than your parents or family members who are your role models? Is there someone in your community that is your role model?

As a young human we tend to believe anything and everything – one of my primary school teachers Mr Goldsmith, made me somehow swap from a staunch Essendon supporter (much to my fathers disdain) to a Geelong supporter in the space of a couple of weeks and for the pure fact he kept telling me that I would never go past Grade 4 if I didn't! Yes, I was a gullible 9 year old! What made it easier was that my uncle was working with Paul Couch (1989 Brownlow Medallist) as a 'garbologist' at the time – I felt the planets had aligned and soon the number 7 badge soon adorned my homemade knitted Geelong football scarf. Even though he somehow coaxed me into changing who I barracked for – this outstanding gentleman was also great role model and extremely well respected by not only myself but many within our local community, and someone who I learnt a great deal from and respected greatly.



Unfortunately, Mr. Goldsmith passed away earlier this year – however the values that he instilled in me as a young child and a young adult will never be forgotten. They are values that I continue to try and instil in those around me. He never talked himself up or let you know about his many contributions that he had made to the local communities, instead you would always hear him say – "I'm just a run of the mill guy". He never wanted recognition for what he had done in life - he used to say: the moral of which is do your best and be proud but at the end of the day "there is no indispensable man". He will be remembered as a man who was passionate about his sport and his family. He just loved being around people and getting involved. You always knew where you stood with Mr. Goldsmith he always told it how it was (whether you wanted to hear it or not). He always took a genuine interest in how you were going and that is probably why he became a key role model (outside of my parents) in my life.

As life progresses our role models will continue to change according to our changing likes and dislikes and societal attitudes. Anyone can inspire. As I have said earlier role models don't have to be famous, they don't even have to play sport, what they must be - is someone that inspires others to imitate his or her good behaviour and helps you to become a valuable member of your community.

I believe that we all **need** a role model/s in our life, I also believe that we can also **be** a role model.

Like it or not being a footballer whether it be at AFL, VFL, NAB league or even country level you will be someone's role model. Right at this very moment I can guarantee that there will be young children out there thinking they can dash off the half back flank like Lachlan Ash, tackle like Matt Rowell, kick a goal like Maddie Patrikios or celebrate like Liv Barber, the list really is endless. You may not think that this is you – but I can guarantee you are being watched and judged. There will be a young boy/girl back at your local club hanging off your every word, your every move, even looking at the way you dress or the way you cut your hair. They may never have met you before but they will be trying to emulate you.

