

2018 Life Member Bios

Alastair Clarkson

A master tactician, Alastair Clarkson led Hawthorn Football Club into a golden era, highlighted by four AFL Premierships – 2008, 2013, 2014 and 2015. Appointed Head Coach in October 2004, Clarkson was faced with a struggling club that had not tasted the ultimate success in thirteen seasons. Development of young players and fresh tactics saw Hawthorn play finals football in 2007. Following a 134-game playing career with North Melbourne and Melbourne, Clarkson came to Hawthorn having served a long coaching apprenticeship. He was assistant coach at St Kilda and then head coach of VFL side, Werribee. He coached Central Districts to the SANFL Premiership in 2001. He was assistant coach at Port Adelaide during that club's 2004 Premiership. Clarkson brought a winning-without-compromise attitude to Hawthorn. He was also able to lure a professional group of coaches and fitness staff to the club, many of whom would remain at Hawthorn through the majority of Clarkson's tenure. Emphasising innovation, versatility and a team first attitude, he developed into one of the most successful coaches in VFL/AFL football. He became the first Hawthorn coach to lead the club to four VFL/AFL Premierships. In 2017, Alastair Clarkson became Hawthorn's longest-serving senior coach when he surpassed John Kennedy, Snr's total of 299 games coached.

David Rath

David Rath was one of the first to join Alastair Clarkson's football department in late 2004. He helped set a standard of excellence that resulted ultimately in the 2008, 2013, 2014 and 2015 AFL Premierships. An expert in biomechanics from the Australian Institute of Sport, Rath helped ensure that Hawthorn was at the forefront of skill and tactics on the field. Once described as a 'mad scientist in running shorts', Rath oversaw analytics and skill development, which helped Hawthorn become one of the most effective sides in the competition. His forward thinking in game and coaching development led to his appointment as Hawthorn's Head of Football Strategy and Innovation in 2017.

Andrew Lambart

Andrew Lambart became physiotherapist at Hawthorn in October 2004 having previously assisted Australian Olympic and Commonwealth Games teams and the Victorian Institute of Sport. As part of the club's medical department, his work to maintain the players' fitness was vital in the achievement of four Premierships– 2008, 2013, 2014 and 2015 – over his fourteen years with Hawthorn.

Andrew Russell

Andrew Russell came to Hawthorn from Port Adelaide as a fitness and conditioning coach in late 2004. Over the next fourteen seasons he would become an integral part of the club's success. He would instigate a fitness program - tailored to each individual player - that would make a significant contribution to four Premierships in 2008, 2013, 2014 and 2015. Russell's elite work was credited in extending the careers of many players, such as Shane Crawford, Shaun Burgoyne and Cyril Rioli. His position within the club was recognised by his elevation to the role of Director of High Performance in 2017.

Jack Gunston

Originally from Mornington-Braeside, Jack Gunston became known as a reliable lead-out mark and kick for goal. He kicked the winning goal for Sandringham in their Under 18s Premiership and was subsequently drafted by Adelaide, where he played 14 games. Arriving at Hawthorn in the 2011 trade period, Gunston played his first game for the club in Round 1 of the 2012 season, becoming the 878th player to debut for Hawthorn. By the second half of 2012, he was an important part of the forward line, playing in the 2012 Grand Final. Gunston would go on to be a vital ingredient of the 2013, 2014 and 2015 Hawthorn Premiership sides. He was also the club's leading goalkicker in 2015 and 2016. His calm and reliable ball use saw him play also as an effective link on the half-back line. He has played 158 games in seven seasons with Hawthorn, 2012-2018, kicking 321 goals. Gunston leadership was underlined when he was selected the club's Vice-Captain in 2019.

Paul Puopolo

Coming to Hawthorn as a mature-age recruit from South Australian club, Norwood, Paul Puopolo quickly became a regular member of Hawthorn's senior side with his strong tackling, quick reactions around goal and spectacular marking ability. He became Hawthorn player number 870 when he debuted in Round 7, 2011. He played in the 2012 Grand Final and became an important member of the 2013, 2014 and 2015 Premiership sides. His strong play and dogged determination as a small forward made Puopolo a firm crowd favourite and a vital part of the forward line. His 100th game came in Round 15 of the 2015 season. In eight seasons at Hawthorn, 2011-2018, Paul Puopolo has played 168 senior games and he has kicked 171 goals.

Ben Stratton

A strong, calm and reliable defender from Western Australia, Ben Stratton came to Hawthorn in the 2009 national draft at the age of 20. Hailing from Yallingup near Margaret River, Stratton had played several seasons of senior football for East Perth (WAFL). He played his first senior game for Hawthorn in Round 3, 2010 season, making Stratton the 865th player to debut. His ability to play successfully on all types of forward saw him as a valued member of the side from his first year with the club. After playing in the 2012 Grand Final, he would go on to give sterling service in defence during the 2013, 2014 and 2015 Premierships. His 169 games came in nine seasons, 2010-2018. Serious injuries sustained during the 2011 and 2017 seasons limited his games tally. Stratton has managed to kick one goal, this coming in the 2010 season. His leadership in the backline was reinforced by his teammates electing him Hawthorn Captain in 2019.

Ryan Schoenmakers

Ryan Schoenmakers came to Hawthorn from Norwood (SA) as the club's first pick in the 2008 draft. A forward during his junior career, necessity meant that he was played as a defender during his formative seasons at Hawthorn. He played his first senior game in Round 1 of the 2009 season, making him the 856th player to debut for the club. Playing in positions that didn't always suit, he would, nevertheless, give his best for his teammates. Improved form would see him play every game of the 2012 season, including the Grand Final. A serious knee injury, though, ended his 2013 season after four games. Hard work saw him return to the senior side the following year. Whilst he missed out on the 2014 Grand Final side, consistent form and a move to the forward line meant that he would become a Premiership player in 2015. Hard work and dedication to his club saw him receive loud acclaim when presented with his 2015 Premiership medallion. Ryan Schoenmakers played his 100th senior game in the Qualifying Final in 2016.