

PLOD ESSAY:

Some Football Poetry Composed Locally

Since we are now smack dab in the middle of the football finals, it seemed a good idea to celebrate the launching of the new Centenary Calendar by showing you the footy photo of the 1913 premiers that sits above September in the calendar and coupling it with a poem by Con Amore that was published in *The Sentinel* in September 1911.



The Champions of 1911.

It was down beyond the Zowlett
In the land of coal and scrub,
That a football team existed
Called the "Ink and Penmen's Club."
They were long and lean and wirey
And hero's to a man,
And a game you couldn't mention
That they didn't understand.

It was also on the coalfield
Where the engines puff and scream
That another club existed,
Called the "Lubricator's team."
They were strong and burly natives,
And from different parts they came
And the way they played the oval
It was seen they knew the game.

Well, the Lubricators challenged
The Penmen to a match,
And the place they picked for battle
Was a wet and sloppy patch.
The game was most terrific
From start until the end,
And each side played most strenuously
Their honor to defend.

But the Penmen scored, and scored again
Until a lead they gained,
When the Lubricator captain's face
Showed traces he was pained.
And the captain of the "Oil and Waste"
Saw his men were in a trance,
So he played some cool collected football
With hope as the only chance.

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But the Irons'ada had lost the game,
Still their spirits knew no bounds,
And the way they cheered the winners,
Well, it almost shook the grounds.
And on wet and misty evenings
If you wish to walk around
You may see their shadows flitting
Upon that football ground.

You can hear the loud collisions
As the ball and boot do meet
And the blowing of the whistle
And the splash of players feet,
Till the terrified spectator rushes
Quite furious to the club,
He's been haunted by the spectre
Of the Lubricator's Club.

CON AMORE.

Of course, some things seem to have changed since this State Mine vs Dalyston game was played in June 1910: "The match was played on the State mine [*sic*] ground on Saturday afternoon last. The ground was in a very sloppy condition, and consequently good football was out of the question. Large pools of water in places covered the ground and 'spills' were frequent. Allison (umpire) had charge of the game, and gave every satisfaction. When the respective teams lined up, the State Mine could muster only 12 players and until the second quarter played six men short.

"The play right throughout was of a general 'give and take' order, until the last quarter, when Dalyston added to their score and won easily by 27 points.

"For the winners, Parker, Daley, Catanuck, Mailer, Allerson and McRae played a good game. For the losers, Piper, Woods, Ballantine and Mentiplay were prominent throughout the game.

"Final scored were: Dalyston - 6 goals 3 behinds; State Mine - 1 goal 6 behinds."

- *The Sentinel* 25 June 1910

We don't see so many 'sloppy' games anymore since the winters are warmer and drier these days.

But, some things remain the same. Consider this description given in the Court of Petty Session of goings on during the Dalyston vs Ryanston game in September 1911:

"Robert Alderson was charged with having assaulted George Marabella during the progress of a football match at dalyston on 29th July - Mr Alhurst appeared for informant and Mr Brunt for the defendant.

"George Marabella gave evidence to the effect that on the date in question he was playing for Dalyston in a match against Ryanston. During the first quarter of the game the defendant struck him on the chest, in the second quarter struck him in the eye with his fist and in the third quarter struck him in the stomach with his fist. One of the players said to him, 'Summons him and I'll stick to you.'

"To Mr Brunt: The Dalyston Club is standing to me. It is practically the club's

prosecution. I was prepared to let the matter drop. Dalyston did not intend to 'rough it' for defendant that day. I did not hit the defendant on the nose either purposefully or accidentally...

"Robert Alderson gave evidence to the effect that he played for Ryanston in the match when the assault as alleged to have taken place. He did not remember seeing Marabella near him during the game that day and did not hit him or anyone else. There was no complaint made to the umpire by the witness [Marabella]. He heard Harcer say during the third quarter, 'Get into them and I'll stick' He may have tramped the informant [Marabella] during the game but did not remember doing so. He got two cracks during the game but took them as a sport should.

"To Mr Alhurst: '[Marabella] struc me on the nose with his elbow.

"With this the P.M. [police magistrate] reprimanded the Alderson and pointed out that he swore he hadn't seen [Marabella] all that day. In answer to the magistrate, Alderson said he cold not explain under the circumstances how Marabella caused the injury to his nose.

[three men from the Ryanston Club gave evidence for the defence.]

"Police Magistrate said he was satisfied the assault had been committed by the defendant and he did not believe one word of his evidence. The evidence of the other witnesses was almost negative. Defendant was fined 40s and £2 1s 6d costs."

- *The Sentinel* 15 September 1911

Too bad they didn't have a Tribunal back in 1911, although the Court of Petty Sessions did pretty well handing out the fines.

Things are a bit exciting around our house because St Kilda has been so wonderful this year. Larry and I are going to the semi-final with our son, who is a member of the MCC, next week. The fact that I am the least bit interested in the footy this year is testimony to how amazing St Kilda has been all season. Naturally, our hero, Nick Reiwoldt (don't ask me the names of any of the other players on the team) would never hit or punch anyone.

