

When it comes to football, I mean, Australian rules football, I admit to having always loved the game. I've played and watched it really all of my life, since I could walk. Out in the backyard, out in the street with my brother or with mates down the street, I've loved training and playing. I've loved playing in the rain and the mud. I love what I've learned from football, especially teamwork. I'm indoctrinated into the notion of teamwork that you sacrifice yourself for the wellbeing of the team. And I've noticed that people who have learned teamwork are much better able to understand how that functions in a workplace whereas people who haven't don't quite understand teamwork.

I also learnt fitness. I remember even as a young footballer being pushed beyond my limits, and that helped me when I was studying in medical school to push myself beyond my limits but also it's given me a desire to always be fit. I really can't stand being totally unfit. And I guess that's because I've known fitness. The peak of my fitness was when I was playing at Swan Districts. Every other night, when I didn't go to training, I would run seven miles or about 11 or 12 kilometers. And I remember that in one job at the Royal Perth Hospital, I worked on the seventh floor and each floor in the hospital has two flights because of the width between the floors to allow for piping and stuff to go through. And there were two extra flights at the bottom, from the lower ground where my car was parked. So probably about 15, or essentially 16 flights of stairs. And I loved being able to run up two at a time, all the way without hardly losing my breath.

Football has also given me great memories, grand finals, lots of functions, grand final success parties, backyard medal counts, really just the time spent with the players, often around at our house for meals.

And most importantly, I've made lifelong friends. Some of my closest friends remain friends that I made through football. I first began playing with the Bassendean Junior Football Club, where I lived. I think I was about nine years old when I joined my first team. I played there, I guess for about eight years. I then went to university and chose to join the university football club really so I could meet people on campus. Because I didn't know anyone at University, having come from a working class area, I chose to play there. I played at Uni for eight years and coached for six and loved it really. I'm a life member of that club now. And one of my favorite lunches every year is the lunch of life members.

I was lucky enough to play or coach in six grand finals and to win four of them. I also spent one year playing for the Swan Districts professional football club, mostly playing in the reserves. I did okay there, but it wasn't really good enough to play more than just one game in the league. But again, I loved it and I've still got lots of great memories and lots of good friends from that time. And now I'm actually co-patron of that football club with Hon Ken Wyatt. And that's something I also really enjoy, not just because I loved the football club (I supported them as a kid and played a little bit), but also because it's my 'place' in an Aboriginal sense. It's where I grew up and so it's a return to my place.