



The Brothers Story

Through the latter part of the nineteen seventies AFL, known more commonly as Australian football or Aussie Rules in those days, was a fledging sport in the region. It consisted of four senior clubs and a junior competition played between Christian Brothers College (now The Cathedral College, West St), Nth Rockhampton SHS, St Stanislaus College (now Emmaus College, Yaamba Rd) in an under 18 competition and later Rockhampton SHS and Rockhampton Grammar School who joined which lead to an under 16 and under competition.

As was the situation with St Stanislaus and Christian Brothers Colleges the students mostly came together in the year 11 age level as St Stanislaus did not continue to year 11 & 12. In 1981 a group of parents of these students recognised that there was no pathway for those boys to continue in the sport unless they joined one of the senior clubs who had not embraced junior football due mainly to the development of the code at the time in the local region. These parents, led by Gordon Gibson and Tony Clifford recruited some senior players who had been past students and some of their mates to form the Rockhampton Brothers Australian Football Club who held its first committee meeting in 1981 at Brothers Leagues Club.

The Club entered the competition in Reserve Grade only in 1982, captain-coached by Michael Bateman and trained on Jardine Park in Wandal. At the time it was the founding members desire to align the club colours to that of the Queensland fraternity of Brother's rugby league (and Union) clubs who wore the navy blue & white horizontal butchers strips, in VFL alignment the Geelong Cats were most similar but unfortunately Blackwater Cats were participating in the CAFL competition so the club embraced the famous North Melbourne colours and emblem. With a mix of older experienced players, the willingness of youth and the enthusiasm of this small group of parents it enjoyed the delights of winning the Reserve Grade Premiership by defeating the Gladstone Mudcrabs whom it had not beaten in the fixture rounds.

The club was then asked to field teams in both A & Res Grade in 1983 and recruited Len Casper as its first senior player-coach. Success was difficult for the fledgling club at this level and recorded two wins for the year. The clubs success was in the achievement of fielding teams in both grades.

In 1984 the Rockhampton City Council offered the club a home ground facility at Victoria Park on Lion Creek Road. This remained the clubs home until its current relocated location at Kele Park in West Rockhampton in 2006. 1984 was a watershed year for the club. It managed to recruit some key players who had been a fixture in the A Grade competition and added some quality players from interstate. Brothers recorded its first A Grade Premiership win in this year when it defeated Parkhurst and Northern Suburbs (now Panthers) at Rockhampton Cricket Ground. In 1985 Parkhurst defeated Brothers in the Grand final in what was the clubs first Grand Final defeat. The 1986 and 1987 Premierships were won by the Roos with the reserve grade team also competing in that competitions Grand final but was unluckily defeated.

The trend for the survival of sporting clubs during the late 1980's was to merge with other organisations. Brothers joined with the Leichhardt Rowing Club in 1989 to become the Fitzroy River Sports Club. This merger was to fold in late 1992 after some troubled financial years. The clubhouse (belonging to the rowing club) burned down a week later through an unrelated event.

Brothers then after a year returned to the clubhouse of Brothers Leagues Club which was located adjacent to the home ground of Victoria Park. This adopted clubhouse and patronage was a boon for the club and it was able to build a 'tin shed' change room for visitors and their home teams. By 1995 the club had climbed from a lower end of the table performer to a strong contender. Helped by the addition of many Parkana FC players who joined after that club folded and the alignment with Rockhampton Grammar school players numbers in Seniors and Juniors had grown. The success of the club on the field was at an all-time high winning both A Grade and Reserve Grade Premierships. Unfortunately for the club it could not repeat the success in the next year and went onto be beaten in A Grade Grand Finals in 1997, 98 and 99.

For a period from the other clubs within the League deemed that Victoria Park was unsafe for match play. For a two year period, the club played its home matches at Stenlake Park returning to home games at Victoria Park in 2002 following assistance from Rockhampton City Council to improve the playing surface.

In 2005 Brothers were again a force in the competition winning the A Grade competition. This was a swansong for Victoria Park as it was to be the last year the club was to call it Home. Due to the expansion of the Rockhampton Show, the City Council constructed the club rooms at Kele Park with a mutual agreement between both the council and the club to relocate.

2006 saw a new beginning with the relocation to Kele Park. The move was a financial struggle for those involved but through determination and support from sponsors, home games went ahead. Construction

of fencing and a retaining wall by club volunteers began the addition of shade area. With a grant approval in 2008 the shaded area was completed providing shelter for spectators and an open area for functions.

Under 11 and under 9's began in 2004, under 7's 2007 and the ladies team emerged in 2010, known as 'the sisters'. With these teams, the club now boasts of 9 teams. With a steady transition of juniors into the senior ranks and several good recruits from interstate 2010 saw a repeat of the 1995 performance when both A & Reserve grades won the respective competitions.

With the club now in excess of 30 years in age, it is not surprising to see the next generation of those early year players now participating for the Roos. Such is the strength and bond formed in the early days and the spirit that fills the present group the Blue and White are set to prosper for years to come.