

Athol McIvor,

17/5/19

Ivan Dean MLC.,  
Henty House,  
One Civic Square,  
Launceston,  
Tas. 7250

Dear Sir,

By way of introduction let me place the following as a background platform.

Firstly, after leaving High School in Hobart, I played 1952-53 with Macalburn (State School Old Boys Assn.). Captained the 1953 team to a premiership. Coached them in 1958. 1954-61 played over 100 senior games for Hobart Football Club. Finished at end of 1961 due to injuries and marriage, Treasurer of Hobart 1967-71. Hobart Old Players Assn. official intermittently for some years. Moved to Devonport in January 1979 as Secretary-Manager of Devonport Football Club for almost two years. Sought private employment thereafter, but continued as club Secretary until 1989. From 1979 to present have been match manager for Devonport home games.

Early 2019 Circular Head (Smithton) went into recession through lack of players. In consultation with the President of that club after there game at Devonport in August 2018, he stated that the local competition, Circular Head Football Assn., field seniors, reserves and under age teams for their 4 clubs, and his club fielding the same number of teams in the NWFL roster. He also made it very clear the co-operation of the C.H.F.A. was basically non existant, and would not attempt any kind of a common sense approach. Having said this I would respectfully remind your committee members that the player shortage has been of serious concern to me for many years. As far as the North-West Coast is concerned there are too many clubs and too many teams, with insufficient players available to service the teams.

Even in the NWFL and formally NTFL this situation has been apparent for many years. The matter has been swept under the carpet many times. As match manager at Devonport, the team sheets submitted clearly shows that Under 18 players have been elevated up to Reserves teams, so as to field a full complement of Reserves numbers. To further compound the problem the NWFL in season 2017 made a ruling that Under 18 players be not permitted to play in Reserves on the same day.

A further situation in the North-West Coast is some players work in the mining industry on the West Coast, and with their work schedule of 12 hour shifts and 4 days on and 4 days off, are unable to commit to football.

About 4 years ago I conversed with North West Football Assn. Secretary (Brian Holloway) as to their number situation. He stated that they were considering reducing their teams to 16 a side. I am not sure if this eventuated.

2015-2017 saw Devonport revert to Seniors, Reserves and Under 18s in the local NWFL competition as well as a Senior team in the State League. This proved to be a costly exercise, as the clubs ability to raise funds and have functions were seriously curtailed with State League side playing in the south, and the local 3 team playing at Devonport or other North-West centres. We were so fragmented and basically split as a result. Being geographically situated was a major impediment to say the least. The 100km or 1 hour west of Launceston was always a problem.

As far as the State League team was concerned, our local support staff were quite emphatic they were not prepared to travel to Launceston or Hobart. They were going to support the local competition only. As a result of this, when the TSL team played away we had a team manager, who also acted as property steward, and one trainer. Totally inadequate. So the decision to withdraw from the TSL was made.

When it became apparent that a withdrawal from the TSL in the latter part of 2017, I fossicked my known sources to unearth the following information.

In 2017 the TSL had 2 paid employees based at Ulverstone, 3 in Launceston, and for "Christ Sake" 23 in the capital. The question should immediately be asked as to what are they responsible for and what is their roles. Of the 28 personnel nominated I would be bold enough to state that 20 plus would be issued with a motor vehicle. Since the advent of a womens competition would add further bodies and cars.

Unfortunately, it seems when the TSL receives more money from the AFL a major portion is allocated to employing more overpaid "boofheads" and additional vehicles.

Should Tasmania be granted an AFL licence in the future, both Hawthorn and North Melbourne return to their Melbourne roots immediately. The State could not support both teams and our own team. Tasmanian players who are currently contracted to AFL clubs would not be released back to Tasmania whilst they have reasonable football left in their bodies. Heaven help that Tasmania be treated like the Brisbane Bears were when they joined the AFL. As Peter Knights commented to Devonport they were allocated I think 3 players from existing AFL clubs, the 3 lesser lights or players going to be turfed anyway. The Greater Western Sydney approach seems reasonable, whereby they recieved many early draft selections.

One gigantic problem will be the perennial North-South conflict. This has been a continual killer for this state in many spheres of activity for decades in respect of training venue and playing centres.

The re-introduction of "The Mariners" is a major step in the right direction for the talented youth. I support this whole heartedly.

The finance of the Tasmanian team would be of a prime concern. Remembering this is not for the initial year, but every year following. The AFL must be the primary money source, as the state cannot be left to foot the bill by itself.

Finally I must comment on the TFL hangers-on brigade. When I have attended TSL functions, which was very infrequent, the same parasites were in attendance. Some have contributed very little to football, others nothing, but at every "Bun Fight" they turn up in the front row. Some of those guys are masters of the art of "Hanger-onship".

Good luck in your endeavours,

*Arthur L. Mather*