**Nomination – Life Membership – Steve Matthews**

As with many life long relationships with a sporting club - it started with a casual conversation that kicked off a connection that remains today, 41 years later.

On this occasion it was a conversation over smoko in 1977 where Brian Wood asked Steve Matthews if he would like to help coach a junior team. The answer was - why not! I'm sure at this stage Steve had no idea what that would mean.

The team Steve agreed to help coach went onto be very successful, one of the first in the Tararua days to reach regional league status, finishing runners up in 1985 and eventually producing a number of players who continued on to play first team football.

Feeling that the players in the team weren't getting a fair go at representative level, Brian and Steve put their names forward to coach the Hutt valley representative team and to their surprise they got the job. The pair took that team to the Fred Burton Memorial tournament in the Hawkes Bay where the team performed well - which according to Steve was a pretty good result considering in those days there wasn't a lot of training available for coaches which meant most of the time they needed to make it up as they went along.

During this time Steve went back to playing and worked his way into the First team. The team worked hard to get out of the local Wellington leagues and eventually broke through into the Central League under the coaching of Billy Carroll. Billy converted Steve from a brilliant centre forward into a grafting centre back - for which Steve still hasn't forgiven Billy - but he was of course correct and that is where Steve played his best football. A knee injury soon after achieving Central League status meant Steve gave away his playing days for a few years, until Brian conned Steve back to play for a social team where 15 minutes into the first game of the season he broke his leg.

Colleen rang Steve a couple of seasons later and got him to fill in for the Marauders, which continued for about 5 years. The itch to play continued but with father time catching up, Steve joined the Rjs and played until he was 52 and the knee was totally buggeerd. The silver lining to this part of the story is courtesy of ACC, Steve now has a new knee!

Steve coached his daughters teams, Rachel and Brooke and would even help coach the pre-cursor to what we now know as First Kicks. Back in the day this was called the Nursery Grade. And while Steve's daughters were a lot older, Steve was still happy to come down in the frost at Harcourt Park, help set up and then coach the Nursey Grade. Steve continued to do this for a number of season's, always happy to coach even though there were no family ties to grade.

While the coaching and playing is an important part of this nomination, what's even more important is Steve's contribution to getting the club to where we are today. After some arm twisting, Steve became the Club President in the late 1990's which was a period that propelled the club into an era where we are able to provide club members with better facilities, better coaching and a wider range of resources than ever before. In this period the new clubrooms at Harcourt Park was completed, the amalgamation with Upper Hutt Soccer Club was bedded in, the first junior training academy was implemented, a director of football coaching was employed and the level of professionalism from both an administrative and playing point of view went to a whole new level. Much of what we have today has been built on this foundation.

And as with any prestigious role such as club President, this came with fringe benefits such as volunteering to run the clubroom kitchen which Steve did with his family for many years. And if you look at the Harcourt Cup which is awarded for outstanding contribution as a volunteer, you will find Steve's name appears on more than one occasion.

Having resigned as Club President and kitchen duties, Steve thought he was free to enjoy watching the football from the balcony with a beer in hand. But that wasn’t to be, when the council agreed to build the turf, a charitable trust needed to be established to manage the facility. Out went the SOS and Steve again put his hand up to help us through the very important establishment phase. Steve acted as a football representative and secretary/treasurer on the trust for the first 4 years in which time the lease agreement had to be worked through with the council, bank accounts and processes had to established, while at the same time filling the ground with sports teams in a way that multiple sporting codes could happily share the facility.

When you look out at the turf facility now - Steve was a very big part in making this happen.

Since retiring from the trust you will still see Steve up at the clubrooms most Saturdays, supporting the team - with that well deserved beer in hand.

Given the enormous contribution over the last 41 years, I'm sure you'll support me in nominating Steve Matthews as a life member.

**Nomination – Life Membership – Billy Carrol**

As with Steve’s nomination, this is another story of volunteer support across a wide variety of roles over many, many years.

Billy Carrol arrived in New Zealand in 1966, playing for Upper Hutt in his first year in the country, with immediate success as the team claimed the runners up award at the regions 7 aside tournament.

After a few months away from Upper Hutt, Billy returned to the valley, playing for a short time with Stop Out and then in 1969 with Lower Hutt.

In 1975 Billy began his coaching career with Upper Hutt, coaching his son’s team, while also joining the Upper Hutt Soccer Club committee.

In the late 70’s Billy began playing for Tararua while still coaching junior football at Upper Hutt – which at the time this multi-club approach raised an eyebrow or two!

Billy’s journey with the mens first team began as a player in 1979 and went through to 1982 before moving onto become the first team coach in 1983.  With a goal of working through the local leagues and climbing into the Central League, the team under Billy’s guidance, achieved this in 1986.  Which at the time this was considered such an important goal as it made the club more credible from a senior football point of view and ensured we were starting to provide a pathway for some of the talented juniors coming through the ranks.  Billy ensured the team remained a competitive force in the Central League before stepping back and taking on a co-coaching role with the 2nd team in 1989 through to the early 1990’s.

With the step up to the Central League came the requirement to provide improved clubroom facilities including larger changing rooms, a referees room, and improved showering facilities.  Having been involved with the building of the darts and football clubrooms at Awaikairangi, Billy was quickly on the scene to help with the Harcourt Park renovations.  Over the period of the offseason, the extension to the shed as it was known (because it literally looked like a shed) was complete, we had two changing rooms instead of two teams trying to squeezing into one, showers rather than rinsing yourself off under the outside tap and somewhere for the referees to change, instead of in the lounge where the supporters were gathering.  With this in the summer of 1987, the club received its licence to play in the Central League and we were away.

If helping build two clubrooms wasn’t enough, when the club moved to Maidstone Park, Billy was here sand paper in one hand and paintbrush in another to make sure we were ready to go before our first season on the turf.  Given the size of the facility and that it had been used as a daycare centre before the club moved in, this was a job fit for a small crew.  We didn’t have a small crew, instead we had Billy and Brian who quietly set about the task over many days until it was complete.

As with previous life member nominations, the playing and coaching support is important but the volunteer work behinds the scene is vital.  From working bees to clubroom renovations, Billy has always been there to help.  Billy’s passion for football and the club has meant we have been blessed with a player, a coach, a tradesman and a supporter who has been there to help since the 70’s, often choosing the big labour intensive roles as his pet projects to move the club forward.

Having retired from the coaching roles Billy has remained an avid supporter often travelling to watch the team play.  While the away trips are a little less frequent now, Billy is here most Saturday’s cheering the first team on and I’m sure you’ll support this nomination to recognise Billy’s contribution to the club as a life member.