

Past Players

Testimonials from our past players - their thoughts and memories shared here:



Liam Duggan

St Patrick's College has played a massive part in helping me achieve my dreams. I was lucky enough to receive a quality education whilst enjoying all St Patrick's had to offer outside of the classroom. The best of both worlds.

The amount of opportunities that St Patrick's presents is incredible and taking some of these opportunities has allowed me to develop not only as a footballer but more importantly as a person.

The football programme allowed me to really enjoy my footy with my best mates wearing a jumper that means so much to not only us, but all involved with SPC.

Under the guidance of Mr Clark I learnt a lot about humility, respect and resilience - values that all boys who put on the jumper learn from being a part of the programme. Given the opportunity to captain the SPC 1st XVIII, I was honoured to be able lead the boys onto the field to play, memories I will cherish forever.

I'd like to thank SPC, and Mr Clark in particular, for the opportunities made available for me and helping me along my journey.

ECKA DORA



Jacob Hopper

I come from a small town in Leeton, NSW, and as much as my move to St Patrick's College was full of excitement it was just as equally full of fear and the unknown. As you can imagine the first couple of weeks of my move were some of the more difficult and challenging weeks of my life. It was not until my first game in the treasured green, white and blue jumper that I truly felt I could call St Patrick's and, as an extension Ballarat, home.

The 1st XVIII football program eliminated any fear that I may have had, instead it fostered a feeling of hope and optimism. The 1st XVIII football program is similar to a family, led by the fatherhood figure Howard Clark. The football program is a brotherhood in arms playing in total friendship and a love for one another. I will never forget the boys that I played with and was fortunate enough to lead. I will never forget the long-sleeved collared guernsey and the emblem stitched in front of my heart - I held these relationships in my heart as I depart St Patrick's College. The SPC culture founded upon passion and care is what separates the school and its football program from any other. I thank and am forever grateful to the football program for making St Pat's home. In the words of great mate, fellow Old Collegian and Richmond player, Dan Butler "I will forever bleed the green, white and blue". Thanks always St Patrick's College.



Drew Petrie

St Patrick's College gave me an opportunity to learn through its education, play sport both as a subject and after hours, but most importantly created an environment for me to develop as a person. In my mind, being intelligent and/or successful at sport comes a distant second to that of being encouraged to lead a respectful and honest existence.

St Patrick's had a lot of success on all sporting arenas when I attended the school from 1995 to 2000. I believe this was built on the foundations of what was learnt away from the fields of battle. Working within a group in your classroom encourages team work and co-operation, vital ingredient to on-field synergy. Playing in the 1st XVIII saw you lining up alongside students from Years 10 -12. Communication on the footy field with fellow students of varying year levels was taught away from classrooms and training sessions. It was taught through the relationships and friendships developed in the lunch times and before and after classes began - during College life you might say.

With the guidance of Mr Gerard Ryan and Mr Howard Clark, those that were a part of the football program quickly understood how to become a great team. And most of that was instilled in us even before we had touched a football. I'll be forever grateful of the guidance given to me by Gerard and Howard.



Dan Butler

Pulling on a St Patrick's College 1st XVIII jumper is something I wanted to do from the moment I walked in the gates of the school. The jumper itself encapsulates everything it means to be a Paddy's boy, pride and brotherhood the first things that come to mind.

Every day of my life, I imagine myself playing another game for this prestigious school - I would kill for another four quarters in that jumper.

The development the school, along with the football programme, gave me was second to none, shaping the person I am today, on and off the field.

The dedication and hard work from coach Howard Clark is the driving force behind why everyone wants to play school football, and why all younger boys aspire to pull on the famous jumper.

This programme offered me a world of opportunities, from travelling Europe and playing Gaelic all over Ireland, to being a part of the record breaking five-peat on the MCG.

Given the opportunity to be the Vice Captain of this side under Duggo was an honour and something I will cherish for the rest of my life.

Thankyou to SPC and Howard for giving me all these opportunities, I cannot speak highly enough of this wonderful school. My heart will forever bleed green, white and blue.

ECKA DORA 🍀



Martin Gleeson

The St Pat's football programme helped me develop my football and myself as a person throughout the year.

As I was only at St Pat's for 2012, I was only part of the programme for one year and without being involved in the programme I doubt I would be where I am now. The programme is by far the best school footy setup in the country and it is evident by how much fun I had and the amount of great people I have met and now call my mates. Playing school footy for St Pat's was the most enjoyable footy I have played due to the countless hours put in by the football department and other members of the College staff.



Jake Neade

I just want to sincerely thank the school for giving me an opportunity to relocate from Elliot in the Northern Territory to not only play footy, but also to attend school. Without St Patrick's College, I wouldn't have completed my Year 12 and accomplished my goals of being drafted into the AFL. Also, with my brother Ben, being the first boy from Elliot to have satisfactorily completed Year 12, I'm extremely thankful for St Patrick's College for making Ben and myself feel very welcome and comfortable during our four years at the school. I will always remember the school most fondly.



Tom McDonald

Moving to St Patricks College was a big decision for myself and my family and one that has changed my life.

The decision was originally made to help boost my football career but it has had so much more of an effect on my life. I still keep in regular contact with the friends that I made at the school and throughout the football program.

The camaraderie and friendship that came from school football is like no other and one I will always cherish.

We had a terrific group and had a great season that resulted in two premierships and a lot of great memories.

The move to SPC was also the reason I got the opportunity to be drafted to the MFC and I hope the school continues to produce many great players and people.

I thoroughly enjoyed my time at SPC and would recommend anyone to get involved.



Tanner Smith

The St Pat's programme gave me a lot of enjoyment, being able to play with all your best mates and to also be fortunate enough to win the *Herald Sun* Shield on the MCG with all your mates beside you is a dream that I will never forget.

The programme helped me develop me as a player on and off the field. Playing TAC also in the same week showed me that I needed to recover regularly, to be right for both games and to get the best out of myself.

And on field definitely made me enjoy my footy in which the game that I love.

I can't say enough how much I enjoyed the programme with all the boys, including being coached by a great and inspiring man. Thanks for the school for getting the best out of me and giving me the opportunity. UP THE PATTIES!



Brad Crouch

At my time at SPC I was lucky enough to be a part of the footy programme for three years and in those three years my football developed more than I could have ever imagined. In year 7 all I wanted to do was to play First XVII Football.

Years later to play First XVIII was an amazing experience. Since year 7 I have made many friends that I remain friends with today. This included great friends such as Mat Begbie, Nick O'Brien and Scott Spriggs. Who all played huge roles in the success of our school football programme. The friendships I developed through school footy was outstanding. When I shared the victory of the Herald Sun Shield Grand Final with the them as well as many other close mates it was the best feeling I have ever had and was the best win I had ever been involved in. The programme developed me a lot as a player and gave me great opportunities for my football to go further. Through history you can see why the programme is seen as being so successful and why many people think that SPC is a breeding ground for AFL footballers. It will continue to be and I am humbled by the opportunity to pull on the jumper and play along side my best mates and for my whole school.



Dallas Willmore

Leaving home, family and friends at the age of 14 to go to boarding school at St Patrick's College was the best decision of my life. Being in the boarding house was always fun and a laugh, with best mates surrounding you all the time. I regularly catch up with them all and text still today. Boarding school allowed me to set routines and have a good balance between football and education.

This has helped with the transition to AFL football and living away from home.

The football program is the best in the country that not only develops you as a footballer, but also as a person. I was lucky enough to play with the 1st XVIII for three years and play in three winning Herald Sun shields. To play on the MCG with my best mates from school is something I will cherish forever and still the most enjoyable football I have experienced so far. It's a credit to the coaching panel to have the boys so well structured and disciplined to the game style that has worked for so many years now.

Thank you to St Pats for the opportunities and life lessons I have learnt during my journey. I definitely wouldn't be where I am today without the support I was given. I look forward to following how the boys are going in the years to come.

Always dare to dream and remember great journeys start with one small step. That step for me was SPC. We are the boys from SPC.



Oscar McDonald

I attended St Patrick's College from halfway through Year 10 until I finished my VCE in 2013. I came into my time at St Pat's with the idea that I would not pursue football as a main priority. Yet after seeing the enjoyment, passion, enthusiasm and mateship of the football program, I soon realised I wanted to be a part of it. The program was not based solely on the football skills of each player, yet their ability to work as a team, their commitment to not just football, but also their education and their involvement in whatever the whole school provided. The St Pat's football program is recognised mainly for its herald sun shield and BAS premierships which is fantastic, but should also be recognised as a program that promotes vital life values and skills.



Dominic Barry

St Patrick's College as a School taught me many good things about life.

I was at the College for four years and during that time I managed to play seven 1st XVIII games.

I enjoyed the Football programme offered by the School because it took a professional approach and, through the BAS and *Herald Sun* Shield competitions, provided us with quality opposition that allowed us to improve on a weekly basis.

I will forever remember and be in debt to St Pat's for giving me the opportunity to grow not only as a footballer but, more importantly, supporting me to become a better person.



Mitchell Brown

My time at St Patrick's College were the best years.

The College and, more importantly, the culture gave me the tools to shape who I am today. Apart from receiving a quality education I received the values which are most important to me as a man in my life today. Loyalty, mateship, passion, love and care. There is no lecture, exam or test that could teach these values. You can only be taught this by the spirit in which every student and teacher brings to the College every single day - the "St Paddy's Spirit". There is no better place to find this spirit than within the St Patrick's Football Programme. This spirit is nurtured by our mentor Howard Clark. This great man has created an environment for young aspiring boys to realise their dreams of one day playing at the highest level. The programme gave me the building blocks to make the transition into AFL football easier and ultimately gave me a headstart in my professional career. Not only did the programme teach me to get the best out of myself on the field but, in times of hardship, off the field I learnt to be resilient and find a way out of the darkness.

It goes without saying that there is something special almost divine about pulling on the St Pat's Football jumper. A jumper which hasn't changed in over 120 years, a jumper which represents the "St Paddy's Spirit".

I will always cherish my time at St Pat's and, in particular, the mentorship from my good friend Howard Clark.



Nathan Brown

The very first experience I had involving the SPC Football Programme, was in year 7 when we sat along the boundary line and watched the 1st XVIII play Ballarat and Clarendon College. To see, what seemed like giants play with such passion and pride, all in front of 800 screaming boys was very inspiring. From that day on, all I wanted to do was put on a St Pat's 1st XVIII jumper and play on the Main Oval in front of my school. Year 7, 8, 9 school football was an experience that allowed me to play with my mates whilst being introduced to traditions and professionalism of SPC football. The way the 1st XVIII conducted themselves throughout the school, we had perfect role models in the lessons of sportsmanship, competitiveness and respect.

I remember the first time I pulled on the 1st XVIII jumper, I looked down at the green, white and blue stripe and remembered the first time I saw this jumper back in year 7 and the way I had idolised it. To this day, this is one of my most cherished moments at St Patrick's College.

The high standard of tradition, values and professionalism accepted by all involved with the SPC football programme helped me advance and fast track not only my career as a footballer but that of a 16 year old boy learning important life skills that I still live by today.

I believe so highly in the SPC Football Programme that I am proud to say it has shaped who I am today, giving me lasting life skills and sense of belonging and brotherhood to a tradition that is widely respected across the world.



Michael Close

St Pat's, where do I start with my journey? St Pat's was the best decision I have ever made for my education, family and for my football. As soon as I arrived at the school, not only students and staff but also the whole wider community, which helped me, grow as a person, welcomed me.

The school offered a range of opportunities and the two biggest ones for me were boarding and school football.

Boarding is what made me looking forward heading back to school on holidays as I made lots of mates, but not only were they just mates, they were mates for life!

Boarding had its own little community that made us united as one and stick together.

School football gave me experiences that I will never get again as I got to play football with my best mates for my school. We showed a lot of passion and mateship to our school and community as I was lucky enough to be in a winning *Herald Sun* Shield premiership, which was played on the MCG.

I will never get this chance again to play with my mates for life in the same team so we will never forget that moment we had together and will cherish it for the rest of our lives. I thank St Pat's for the opportunities that it gave me and look forward to following how the school is going and very proud to be a 'St Pat's Old Boy.



Jesse Palmer

Heading to St Patrick's at the beginning of 2013 was easily one of the best decisions I made for my education, football and development. The school gave me a lot of opportunities which I'll never forget. The football program brought me a lot of enjoyment and opportunities. I was fortunate enough to play alongside my best mates which is something I'll never forget. I can't say enough about the St Patrick's football program and the influence it had on me both on and off the field. It was a privilege to play for a school with such a great history, values and tradition. I was taught skills that fast tracked my career and helped me get the most out of myself. It was the most enjoyable football I've played, alongside great people including mythe entire coaching panel.

Thanks to St Patrick's for the opportunities the school gave me. I'll never forget it! I look forward to following the College in the future and am very proud to say that I'm an Old Boy.



Nick O'Brien

Being a part of the First XVIII provided me with many great experiences that helped me not only grow as a footballer, but also as a person.

The unique opportunity to play a high standard of football with your best mates under the guidance of great mentors is something that myself and my teammates cherished and will continue to reflect upon for years to come.