

History of the Gumeracha Netball Club Inc. From 1937 to 1997

Written by Helen Cook for the celebration of the clubs 60th anniversary - 1997

The Gumeracha Basketball Club came into being on Saturday May 1st, 1937. Present at this inaugural meeting were: Misses Sylvia Hobby, Joy Cornish, Doreen Jamieson, Lorna Bleeze, Valerie Quinn, Joyce Hobby, Dorothy Buckley and Jean Colbey. Miss Jean Colbey was duly elected as Secretary, Miss Hobby as Captain and Miss Colbey as Vice Captain. Mr S Butler was invited to be the first ever Patron and Mr Schwerdt was appointed as Coach. The costumes for the club were nominated as middle brown and orange. Subscriptions were set at 3/- (3 shillings).

The next minuted meeting in January 1938 was to investigate the possibility of forming an Association with neighbouring towns. Chain of Ponds, Houghton, Cudlee Creek, Birdwood and Lobethal clubs were to be approached.

Owing to the war and petrol restrictions, it was decided in June of 1940 to recess the club for the duration of the war and the 2/-shilling subscription was returned to members. The club became active again in 1943 with practices in the hail on alternate Thursday evenings. Matches were played on Saturdays on the courts which were located adjacent the Town Hall.

Between 1943 and 1947 attempts were made to form a new Association with Lobethal, Birdwood, Mt Pleasant, Lenswood, Cudlee Creek, Kersbrook, Houghton and Williamstown. Negotiations continued in 1948, which was also the year that our foundation colours of black and white were first worn.

In 1949, an Association was formed and one team from Gumeracha was entered into this competition in 1950.

A ladies and a gents team were entered into The Murray Ranges Basketball Association in 1951 to compete against Mt Pleasant, Birdwood, Eden Valley and Springton, This presumably was a night competition. A Saturday afternoon competition for a B grade team comprised teams from Kersbrook, Lenswood, Birdwood, Lobethal and Gumeracha.

In 1952 efforts were made to form a day Association, which would follow the Footballers where possible. Night Basketball continued at this time too.

It appears that 1953 to 1958 were lay years with two meetings in 1958 failing to gain enough support to re-form. Sometime before 1964, there was yet another proposal to re-form the club and join the newly formed Torrens Valley Basketball Association. As the town courts were in a poorly state, the school court was to have been used.

1964 saw the rebuilding of the club, with 3 senior and 2 junior teams. For identification the senior teams were blue, gold and black, a 3" blue or gold sash helping to distinguish the teams. The Junior teams were blue and black with the blue team wearing a 2" blue sash. The uniforms were made of a cerise fabric in the tunic style and primary school children were permitted to wear their school sports uniform so as not to incur the extra expense of a club uniform.

Fundraising was a major focus for the club in 1965 as its membership was increasing. A cake stall was held and also a car rally. One of the prizes for placing in the car rally was a roast chicken dinner. More specifically, someone donated the fresh vegetables and a poor unfortunate rooster... ready for roasting. A harsh lesson to any other roosters who might

choose to wake everyone at a most unwelcome hour. Bibs were also to be made to replace the coloured sashes. 4 teams made the finals, 3 of them through to the Grand Final.

1966 saw 2 junior teams reach the finals and the A grade finished 5th. Excitement abounded in 1967 as the two B grade teams played off for the premiership. The Gold team were eventual victors over the White team by just one goal. The A grade took out the premiership and one junior team made the finals, a good effort from the six teams who played the season. Subs were raised to \$2 senior & \$1 Juniors and lighting was installed at the courts.

1969 and a 5c levy was placed on home matches to offset the cost of balls. Lightning carnivals were attended at Gawler and Lenswood and a team fielded in The Mid Hills Basketball Association tournament. Uniforms were to be 12" from the ground.

1970 saw moves to begin a mini league for junior players. There was also much debate about changing the Association, which the club was playing in at the time as there had been many incidents of poor sportsmanship from the opposition and the grading of many teams had been less than equitable. Also playing this year was a "young mothers team" which played in the North East Hills Basketball Association. A side womens basketball became known as netball in 1971 and the club played as part of The Millbrook Netball Association. Controversy abounded during the Grand Final against Kersbrook as a result of poor playing conditions, unduly rough play due to lack of control by the umpire and to add insult to injury, the goal posts weren't vertical either. These details came from a letter of protest to the Association.

In 1973 the uniform consisted of a black tunic, white shirt and white tassel. A decision to build new courts in Gumeracha was made in 1974. These are the courts in use today and many of you would be unaware that croquet was played in this location prior to the building of the courts. A new style of tunic was also to be worn in this year featuring the letters G.N.C. embroidered on the front.

1 sub junior, 1 junior and 2 senior teams played in the Millbrook Netball Association in 1975. One of the senior teams was a "married womens team", and the A grade took out the Premiership. Every other team also played in the Grand Final.

The first club Life Membership was awarded in 1977 to Robyn Mullins (formerly Coleman). The timing of this award obviously coincided with her marriage as it was suggested this would make an ideal wedding gift from the club. Robyn had spent many years supporting the club and was a worthy recipient for her valuable contribution with coaching, umpiring and on the management committee. The Torrens Valley Netball Association also commissioned 3 club members at this time to work on a new constitution for the growing Association.

A first in 1978, as the double umpiring system was introduced. Up until this time, only 1 umpire controlled each match. An Umpires Association was to be formed to train and assist umpires as the importance of their role in the sport was finally being recognised.

The committee of 1978 signed on the dotted line committing the club to a fixed payment of \$350 a year for the ensuing 10 years as their contribution to the cost of the newly completed courts. With a healthy bank balance of over \$1000, the payments were seen as highly achievable. Insurance policies were offered in 1979 but at a sizeable \$30 per player, quite a contrast to the \$3 or \$4 we pay today.

A new decade and a new era for the club as we became incorporated in 1980. This was also the first year we were to play in The Mid Hills Netball Association. One senior team played there while the other teams remained in the Torrens Valley Association. The senior teams also changed uniform this year playing in a black and white skirt and white shirt with black trim. It took only a year for the rest of the club to follow to Woodside, with 1 intermediate and 2 senior teams being nominated. In 1981 the young Senior B2's were the first Gumeracha team to take out a Premiership at Woodside.

A very ambitious proposal was put forward at this time to build a sporting complex in Gumeracha. A stadium was to have been located near the oval and was to include netball, tennis & basketball facilities, squash courts, social facilities and could have been used as a roller skating rink. Estimated costs were about \$130,000 with grants covering around \$65 to \$75,000. An initial donation of a mere \$200 was requested from the netball club to be placed in a 'building fund' account. Despite the best intentions and the obvious amount of work done to get this off the ground, it unfortunately was not to be.

Mrs Heather Lee and Mrs Ina Green were awarded Life Memberships for the club in 1981 after providing many years of valuable service with both ladies having coached and umpired and represented the club for many, many years.

Five senior and five junior teams played in 1983. The club was so large, that a social committee was formed. One premiership was taken out in this year by the intermediate G1 team. The following year, the netball club became affiliated with the Sporting Club in an effort to bring the towns sports people together.

The G grade team took out the premiership in 1985 and again in 1986, when four players from our 7 teams won Mid Hills Association trophies.

Four teams of our eight reached finals in 1987 with the F grade eventual premiers. Two players were awarded Association trophies in '87.

Another premiership in 1988, this time for the E grade. The current style of skirt was also introduced late in the 1980's.

Another change in the uniform in 1991 to a plain white polo shirt and 3 players from Gumeracha were selected in the Under 19 Rep team. The following year the current design warm up jacket became available. Also in 1992, one of our players was awarded the Association Best & Fairest for C1.

Success for the under 17 div 1 team in 1993 as they took out the premiership with a thrilling 52 to 51 scoreline after extra time because of a draw. There was jubilation among the players and spectators after such a high scoring and thrilling match. The B1 & C1 teams both unfortunately lost their Grand Final matches later that day.

Five players from our club were part of the Dairy Vale cup teams that year.

This was a sign of things to come for several of our club members, most notably, the U 17 coach Bronwyn Harris who now coaches A2 in 1997 for Oakdale and Kerry Newman from the victorious U17 team who is playing for Oakdale in the elite State League Competition. Several of Kerry's team-mates from this time also took up positions in the high profile clubs in Adelaide. We also had the Association Best & Fairest & runner up in the B1 grade. It is almost unheard of for two players from the same team to win these awards and the Best and Fairest player for the C1 grade in 1993.

1994 was the most successful Premiership year for the club with 3 teams taking out the title. Our under 13's and Senior C1 and B1 teams were proud victors this year and for several of the senior players it was great to crack a win after having lost Grand Finals in the previous years.

The make up of the A grade team was changed in 1995 as some of our younger players moved out of the club, several of them as mentioned earlier, to the larger clubs in Adelaide. The nucleus of the A grade remains today as it was in 1995.

In 1996, we were unable to secure a grand final berth for any of our teams, but 2 junior players made Rep teams. As has been the case for several years, a club coach was appointed to coach a rep team. 1996 was the inaugural year for the new League Competition which comprises of the 4 best teams from our Mid Hills Association & The Hills Association creating an eight team elite competition in the Adelaide Hills. With commitment and training, in years to come, our club could become part of this competition. This is something for our younger players to strive for.

To this year and as mentioned earlier, one junior team made the finals series, we again provided a Junior player & coach to Rep teams. Three players from Gumeracha picked up Junior Association runner up trophies and also the Senior A grade Association Best & Fairest award - a first in the history of the club.

The present day members acknowledge and congratulate our predecessors who have contributed to the administration of the club and the development of its players. It is due to the effort and commitment from these people that today we are able to come together and celebrate the milestone of the 60th Birthday of The Gumeracha Netball Club.

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