

# Mark Drysdale

## Hall of Fame 2014



Mark Drysdale was born in Sterling, Scotland, in 1964, and emigrated with his parents, brother, and sister, to Australia in 1974 and has lived on the Central Coast ever since.

His introduction to football was in Scotland, playing in organised competitions amongst neighbouring “courts” where they lived in Alloa, and also within the local Catholic Church competition.

The first team he played for on the Central Coast was The Entrance at the age of 10. But, he became a bit of a nomad next playing with Wyoming for one season and then East Gosford for two seasons. Mark mainly played centre forward or centre midfield in those early days.

He was accepted as a Central Coast Rep. player at 12 years of age, playing club football on Saturday for East Gosford and Rep. Football on Sunday against Sydney teams. Whilst playing for the junior reps. Mark mainly played a midfield role.

The highlight of each of his junior local teams was that with each team he won the League Championship or the Grand Final. Two of his coaches that stood out were Paul Corbert, {East Gosford} and Ray Presdee. {Wyoming} Mark was selected to play Representative football for the Central Coast up to the age of 16 and was playing in the N.N.S.W. championships in 1980. At these championships he was selected to play for an under 16 Australian invitational team which travelled to Europe for 11 weeks playing against teams from Holland, Germany, Austria, and Italy. The team was coached by Kevin Cunliffe. This tour was a wonderful opportunity for Mark and an amazing experience which he will never forget. The team played almost 50 games on tour in Australian colours and played against regional sides, and on some occasions in Germany played as the warm up game to the Division one clubs in capacity stadiums.

Owing to the tour Mark missed one season with the Central Coast Reps. But was again selected for the inaugural season of the Central Coast “Coasties” in 1982 and in 1983 coached by Bill Vroylks. Mark believes that Bill Vroylks had a very good influence on his football, being the first coach to convert him to the position of fullback. His favoured position, however, became sweeper.

It wasn't long before Mark was recognised for his consistency and was selected in the First Grade side. The 1981 Coasties team played in the N.N.S.W. State League, which was a huge learning curve for them in that first season, or to put it in Mark's words “we were smashed practically every game”!! At the age of 17, Mark was the youngest player in the team but according to coach George Cousins acquitted himself very well.

In the second season, the team produced some amazing results to win the League, and was runner up in the grand final, losing 3-0 to Weston.

Mark also has special memories of playing for the Central Coast “Coasties” when Bruce James was the first team coach and the club was playing in the NSW Division One. The team reached a couple of finals series under Bruce but in 1995 they were runner up in the First Grade Premiership, and Grand Final winners 4-2 against Belmore FC at Gabbie Stadium, Blacktown, with Mark scoring the fourth goal. The following season the Coasties were promoted to NSW Super League.

Apart from the success of 1995 Mark thrived on the challenge of playing against teams at the highest level in the NSW Federation, and at the quality grounds with their associated history. All of this was a wonderful experience as was the opportunity to play with quality players throughout his career.

Mark played for a few coaches in his 20 years at the Coasties but would like to acknowledge the contribution and wisdom of two individuals in Jim Foley and Allan Bourke. Both men had a major influence on Mark's outlook on the game, assisting greatly in his playing career.

Mark Drysdale finished his long and successful career with the Coasties in 2001 after playing over 320 first grade games over 20 years. For some of that time he had been captain of the team and club captain, and as recognition of his long serving role and loyalty to the club, he was made a life member of the Central Coast Soccer Club - a richly deserved award. Mark was subsequently inducted into the Hall of Fame 2014