

# David Fitzsimmons

Hall of Fame 2015



David Fitzsimmons was born at Gosford in 1961. He started playing for East Gosford Club in 1967 in the Under 6 team. He was introduced to soccer by his father Danny, who also played on the Coast for Gosford in the 1950s. David would be followed into soccer by his younger brother's Daniel and Darryl together with the family's off-springs in time. His father was a devoted supporter and was always on hand to help out where ever he could.

David stayed at East Gosford for three years, when his father successfully established a breakaway club nearby, named Springfield in 1970. The Club only lasted to 1979, and East Gosford took over the reins again of the area. The Fitzsimmons, however, moved over to the Gosford Club, where they have sown their seeds ever since.

In 1970, when Springfield started, Dave played there for 4 years (U9, U10, U11 and U12 in 1973) then with the blessing of his father to help a struggling Davistown club, transferred to Davistown(U13 1973). He was back at East Gosford (U14 1974 & U15 1975) to play in the stronger competition and reverted back to Springfield (U16 1976-Seniors 1977) to help out.

During this period he also represented Central Coast at the Northern NSW State Titles for 7 years (1970 U10 - 1976 U16). It was during this period that David, a then 15 year old field player, was rushed into the game to play goalkeeper, when the regular keeper failed to show up for a game. David performed admirably and found himself, thereafter, tagged as being a goalkeeper. He did however, when the chance arose, enjoy playing on the field. A distinguished all round player. This new move to goalkeeping prompted his father in 1977 to take David to Sydney's Western Sydney Club where he received, each Wednesday night for 10 weeks, some expert goalkeeping training, which has served him well for the rest of his career.

Dave had his first semi-professional experience at the age of 18 (1978) when he signed for Central Coast United (CCU) and played in the U19 (Reserve grade) in the Newcastle First Division competition. He was overawed, at the time, to be training with first grade players such as Jeff Heyden, Terry Lamb, Darryl Mellish, Greg Smith and Les Walters. The next year (1979) he was promoted to CCU First Grade, now playing in 2nd Division, having been relegated the previous season. David was allowed this year to dual register and play for the local Gosford club. For both Clubs, he played U19s on the field and in goals for the first grade.

In 1980, Dave continued his goalkeeping with CCU First Grade and was included in the Newcastle KB Youth squad and represented NNSW in a friendly against the Australian Olympic team. He returned to his Gosford for the 1981 season

In 1982 Central Coast Soccer Association (CCSA) entered a First and Reserve grade team in the new Northern NSW State League including teams from Tamworth, Coff's Harbour and Armidale as well as the top Newcastle Clubs. It was an opportunity that Dave could not ignore. The new CCSA club would mean that 4 Clubs from the Central Coast were plying their skills in the Newcastle competitions. CCU, Doyalson RSL and Gosford Rangers were all in lower Divisions, but would all fold at the end of the 1982 season. CCSA Club was the start of a semi professional Club with the backing of the whole Association and provided a pathway, to which the youth of the Central Coast could aspire. Dave is very proud of being a part of the inaugural club and its continued progress to develop better players. Dave was also selected in the NNSW State team which played against touring team at different times and days through the year. He also met two other players (Dale Eggleton and Mark Drysdale) in the 1982 team, who are also proud recipients of the Hall of Fame honour.

Dave continued with CCSA in 1983, and partly due to the folding of the other Central Coast clubs in Newcastle, the first team became stronger and finished the season with impressive results - League Champions and Runners Up in the Grand Final. Bill Vrolyks was the coach. The wheel had turned its full circumference in only 2 years. David continued with the Club for the 1984 season.

Rugby League was the winner for the 1985 season. Ourimbah started Dave in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade (2 tries and kicked all the goals), next week Reserve grade (1 try and kicked all the goals), next week First grade (kicked all the goals). But it was not what Dave really wanted. He returned to his homely Gosford in 1986, and together with, what would be his long time right hand man, Col Seggie (long term member of the Gosford Club and CCF office bearer) would try to promote his Club to the top Premier League, without luck, for the next two years.

In 1988 he returned to his first love, Central Coast Reps. He always pushed himself to play at the highest level and for the next 4 years represented the district with distinction and saw the Club slide safely into the Sydney based NSW State Leagues starting in 1989, after approval was gained for the Club to transfer south, away from Newcastle based competition. It was during this stint he developed a great mateship with Derek Caisley and Brett Margin.

In 1992, he and Derek signed with Dulwich Hill in the Sydney Division 1 League, the same League as the Central Coast. Dave didn't last the full season and returned to play for The Entrance mid season. He returned to the Central Coast Reps in 1993 and played as an over aged player in the successful Under 21s. The team were League Champions and Premiers.

In 1994, he took on the role again to promote his Gosford out of the 2<sup>nd</sup> tier Premier League 2. With the help of some players from the Rep U21 from 1993 and his mates Brett Margin and Col Seggie, he immediately was successful by gaining promotion and continued the success, attracting Derek to join him and Brett, for the next two years (1995,96) which ended with two Premierships.

Satisfied with this success, the desire to play at a better level was too strong and he again joined the Central Coast Reps in 1997 and 1998. He also, took on the coaching of the 1996 U15, 1997 U14 and the 1998 U15 junior teams.

In 1999, he accepted the challenge to coach in an unfamiliar environment to him, at the Wyong Club. He was able to persuade Brett Margin and Derek Caisley to the fold along with other past team mates. He stayed for 3 years to win the Premiership in 1999.

He left Wyong and had a season with the mates at East Gosford in 2002 and retired 2003.

The call came from Gosford and for the next six years (2004-2009) he put all his energy into improving the status of the junior and senior ranks of the club.

Dave wanting a change with no responsibility had a season (2010) at Kanwal over 35s and then in 2011, he accepted the role of head coach at the Budgewoi club but unfortunately failed to ignite the potential of the club and only stayed the one year.

At this stage (2012), he decided to retire again and only returned in 2014 to play with his mates at East Gosford in an over 35 team.

David has been a part of the Central Coast football family for near 50 years. He has represented the region with distinction in both junior and seniors for 20 of those years. He has brought honours to the Gosford and Wyong Clubs in the local first grade competition. David's devotion to the Central Coast landscape and its betterment makes him a popular and deserved recipient to the Hall of Fame 2015.

Published 14-Mar-16