

John McLafferty (1960-2016)



John was born 1960 in the North Lanarkshire town of Coatbridge, Scotland (about 12 km east of Glasgow). He was brought up with two brothers (Dennis and Andrew) and two sisters (Mary and Sheila).

John's home was only a stone's throw from Cliftonhill Stadium, where Albion Rovers played their home games (club badge pictured). As early as 5 years old, with his mates, John climbed over barbed wire walls to get into Albion's home ground games to watch their heroes. The football seeds were sown at a very early age. During his youth, John captained the Airdrie and Coatbridge select teams.

After he left school 1974, John began his working life as an apprentice chef in Gatsby's restaurant at Charing Cross, Glasgow. The restaurant was situated conveniently next to the Scottish Football Association Head Office, where he chatted with prominent Scottish officials during their lunch breaks.

At age 23 (1983), John together with Alison, his school girl friend, decided to up-root when he was invited to work in the Bahamas, West Indies. He immediately became settled in the kitchen of the prominent restaurant.

In 1985 they emigrated from the Bahamas to the Manly on the north shore of Sydney, where John immediately found work in the kitchens of the five Star Regents Hotel, Circular Quay, Sydney. He was playing football, as much as he could, for a local Manly club. But working in kitchens was a full on occupation with little breaks.

He subsequently found a new job, in 1990, as a teacher at the Commercial Cookery at Northern Sydney Institute of TAFE Ryde campus. A more flexible position, which he held up to 2015.

The family moved in 1991, now including Sean and Susanna, to Narara on the Central Coast.

He joined the Wyoming FC as a player in 1992 and the following year (1993) he took over as coach in the Premier League reserve grade team.

John's family increased again in 1993 with the birth of Jamie.

He then went on to coach the Wyoming First Grade side in 1995 and 1996, which saw him take out the Central Coast Football Coach of the Year award in 1995.

Between 1997 and 2003 John coached Central Coast representative teams (Coasties) in the New South Wales State League competitions moving up from the 1997 U16s through the ranks to First Grade from 2001 to 2003. In the 2001/02 season, he coached the U19 team to success in both the premierships and the grand final, the first time that any Central Coast representative team had won a title in the top tier NSW competition, then called the Premier League. John returned to coaching Wyoming in 2004 - 2006 taking the Club to its first Premier League title, in nearly 25 years, with a penalty shootout win over East Gosford in the 2004 grand final at Central Coast Stadium. John was awarded Life Membership of the Wyoming Football Club in 2004 for his achievement and bringing a football attitude to the top graded teams and players of the Club.

In 2007 and 2008 John went back to Central Coast as first grade coach, then called CC Lightning.

2009 saw him take on the First Grade coach of the Sydney Super League club Spirit FC (a feeder club of the Gladesville Hornsby Football Association).

In 2010 he returned to the Central Coast as the assistant coach under Tony Walmsley of the Central Coast Mariners team in the newly-formed National Youth League (NYL). After winning the title in 2011/12, John took over as National Youth League Head Coach in 2012/13 narrowly missing out on the chance to defend the title in 2012/13 when the deciding final round match against Melbourne Victory was abandoned.

Spirit FC was to be John's next destination, after gaining a good reputation at the Mariners, he became the Technical Director in 2013 and also coached the First Grade squad in 2015 where they won the NSW Men's 2nd tier Premiership, as well as overseeing the Spirit Youth program which achieved a number of Premierships and Championships. In 2016, he took on the full time position at Spirit FC after retiring from TAFE.

John died suddenly on Wednesday 24 August 2016 from a heart attack. He was 56 years of age. John brought a lifetime of football and culinary expertise from around the world, to those who were lucky enough to be a part of his life. His passion, wit and humour made learning so much more fun. A brilliant football mind and a superb communicator made his ability to nurture, influence, motivate and connect to people, no matter their age, was a rare gift.

The Central Coast Football Association has named the Central Coast Football, Premier League, First Grade, Coach of the Year Trophy in his honour.

Both sons, Sean and Jamie, still play for the Wyoming FC.

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