

'Piggy' Walters (let's go with Brent Crosswell's call)

Ex President, Club Development Manager, Father of Ben (Stork) and Sam (151 and 68 games respectively for Broadbeach), current IOC Coordinator and current Husband of Maree ex-Juniors President, is listed in "The Encyclopaedia of AFL Footballers" thus:

*WALTERS, Robert (Melb) 1977 – 81, 25 games, 46 goals (b 13 Nov 1955, 193cms, 99kgs). (Now that's a bloody big baby! – Ed)
Ex- Romsey.*

It's time we appreciated the bloke who is one of us. Bob came to the attention of VFL clubs in the 1975 when as the 18yo vice captain and premiership player for Romsey he kicked an astonishing 150 goals and won the RDFL (Riddell District) Best and Fairest. Last weekend Bob was in Romsey celebrating the 40th anniversary of that premiership – one can still hear the bullshit from here.

But his feats that year went beyond the RDFL. In June he played on a permit for the Dees Magoos against the Woods on the Queen's Birthday weekend. A traditional blockbuster of the day. Bob kicked the lazy 6. Ivan Moore the Secretary back then, sent him a cheque with the following.

*"Robert, cheque of \$17 is for the "One famous game" on the MCG.
Hope there are many more to come. Regards Ivan."*

(To put that in perspective, it probably purchased about 30 pots and a mixed grill at the Romsey Pub back then)

The Melbourne Football Club 1975 Retrospective notes:

"Throughout the year, under the direction of the Chairman of Recruiting, Ian Ridley, and Senior Committeemen Ken Carlon and Barry Bourke, our Recruiting Officers have been very active in seeking the new players needed by our Club to rise up the VFL ladder. No area or information has been ignored and we would like to express our appreciation to the League and Club officials in both our Metropolitan and Country Zones for the courtesy they have shown to our representatives at the matches that they have attended in their respective areas.

Listed below are some of the players who we anticipate will be participating in our 1976 pre-season matches.

Mark Czarnecki - Centre Carrum

Michael Graham - Half Forward Sturt

Peter Johnston - Ruckman St. Virgil's, Hobart

Neville Mills - Forward Euroa

Phillip Seaton - Centre Tongala

Robert Walters - Forward Romsey

Morris Wingate - Centre Kyabram"

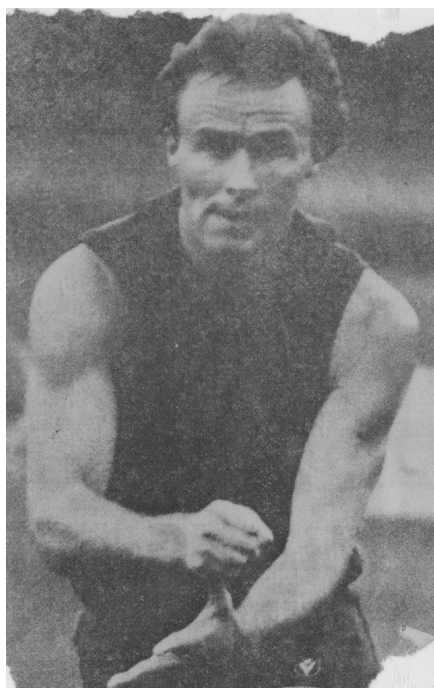
(From the Demonland 2015 Retrospective:

<http://demonland.com/forums/index.php?/topic/37805-1975-a-retrospective/>)

Bob spent 1976 in the Magoos wearing #45 and headed the Demons goal kicking with 65 for the season. He debuted in Round 12, 1977 wearing #32 against the mighty Bloods at the Lake Oval in front of 20,785 people, none of whom booed. The Demons went down by 6 points with Bob kicking just the one. Ironically his coach that day was Bob Skilton.

In and out of the side 1977 – 79, in '78 and wearing #16 (the 19th player to wear that number) he was Runner-up in the Reserves Best and Fairest, and their leading goal kicker with 44. Bob knocked up 8 goals in a game for the Ressies on three occasions (Tigers 'in 76, and the Doggies and Bloods in '78). 1979 was a seminal year for Bob in more than one way.

In the opening round of '79, and playing at the MCG in the Commodore Cup against Footscray - Ray Johnson was probably their tactical advisor – Bob was reported for spitting in the face of field umpire Bulluss. (There were two umpires in '79 – introduced in 1976). The press report makes it clear that spitting was, and still is, up there with kicking in terms of VFL/AFL culture. The umpire gave evidence that a "spray of saliva" hit him in the face as he tried to explain a decision. The tribunal chose to believe that the contact was incidental and dismissed the charge after only ten minutes of deliberation. Bob was cleared and laconically remarked "I'm just glad to get out of it. I'm going home to feed my dog".



Looks like he was training under Hirdy back in the day. Very beefed up (on sups?) and please note the hair

Demon on spit charge

By **STEPHEN PHILLIPS**

Melbourne utility player Robert Walters will front the VFL Reserve Grade tribunal tonight charged with spitting at a field umpire.

Walters, 23, was reported for the first time in his three seasons with Melbourne during Saturday's Commodore Cup match against Footscray at the MCG.

He was reported by field umpire Brian Bulluss for "allegedly spitting at the umpire."

He will appear before the tribunal chaired by Bob Nunn, with Bill Metherall and Bill Wallace at 7.30 pm tonight.

Chairman of Melbourne's match committee Barry Bourke said last night that Walters was "a bit shattered" by the report. "He's never been reported before. This charge is completely out of character for Robert Walters," he said.

Walters has played four senior games since being recruited from Romsey in 1977.

Melbourne general manager Ray Manley said he hadn't heard of the report until he arrived at the ground yesterday morning.

"We are disturbed. It is a serious charge," he said.



Captain coach Carl Ditterich praises his nine-goal full-forward Robert Walters

In Round 17 of that year the Demons lost to the Roy Boys by a VFL/AFL record 190 point margin. Gary Wilson racked up 42 possessions that day, real possessions, not the lay-offs around the packs we see today. The next week coach Ditterich ('The Shadow') called up Bob to the Ones and he responded with 9 goals (6 in one stanza) against the Bombers to help the Dees over the line by 29 points. We think this is still a club record. To cap off that effort, in the return round against Fitzroy, Round 2, 1980 he calmly slotted 7. This too remains a club record.

A broken cheek bone suffered in Round 5 1980 in a loss to Carlton saw him play just 4 more games for the year. In 1981 he played his last game (Round 14 against St. Kilda before breaking his ankle in a reserves game and missing the rest of the year.

He left the Demons at the end of '81 and took Seymour to a Goulburn Valley premiership, and then went across to the Woods in '83 but did not add another senior game of VFL footy.

MAGPIES		
NEW		
Fatui Ataata (U/19s)	Chris Carpenter (Launceston)	
David Cloke (Richmond)	Russell Dickson (Greensborough)	
Greg Fyffe (U/19s)	Carl Herbert (Mayne, Q'ld)	
Scott Knight (North Launceston)	Tony Kally (Preston)	
Darren McLaine (Eltham)	Doug Page (St Kilda)	
Robert Perry (Fitzroy)	Charlie Richards (Healesville)	
Mike Richardson (Swan Districts)	Paul Rizonico (U/19s)	
Gordon Sumner (U/19s)	Gary Shaw (Claremont)	
Frank Sansonetti (U/19s)	Phillip Walsh (Hamilton)	
Robert Walters (Melbourne)		
OLD		
Graeme Allan	John Annear	Mark Williams
Dennis Banks	Ricky Barham	Stuart Atkin
Tony Beers	Murray Browne	Glyn Bellinger
Peter Carter	Ian Cooper	Ray Byrne
Chris Dalkin	Craig Davis	Peter Dalcos
Wes Fellowes	Tom Floyd	Alan Edwards
Tony Keenan	Rene Kirk	Mark Hannebery
Noel Lovell	Wally Lovett	Mark Lawson
Geoff Miles	Neil Peart	Peter McCormack
Tony Russell	Paul Ryan	Bill Picken
Andrew Smith	Tony Shaw	Derek Shaw
Graham Teasdale	Craig Stewart	Mike Taylor
Mark Weideman	David Twomey	Jamie Turner
OFF		
Terry Domburg	Mark Dreher	Warwick Irwin
Stan Magro (WA)	Peter Moore (Melbourne)	Russell Ohlsen,
Kevin Worthington (WA)	Michael Fallon	(Preston)

On a Demons chat site Bob was described as a "...medium sized marking forward with a good kick." His tumultuous career had has its fair share of highlights, amongst which are the team mates and coaches he played with and under. Take his coaches for example: Skilton, Ditterich, Barassi, Shelton and Cahill, not exactly unknowns in our great game. Topping them off were the likes of players Crosswell, Flower, Healy, Alves, Wells and Biffin, not to mention his lifelong mate Greg Hutchinson. Those enduring relationships and respect are clear in an article by the brilliant Crosswell post his wonderful

football career. And who knows what may have eventuated had Bob not stuffed up his ankle.

Former AFL player BRENT CROSSWELL relives a Demons nightmare

GARY BAKER, 1.98 metres tall, 98 kilos, VFL ruckman, is in Adelaide for the 1975 Football Championships and he's leaning on a hotel bar with his travelling companion, the great E.J. "Teddy" Whitten; raconteur, football master, team-mate.

Whitten spots a blonde. "She's staring at you," he says.

Baker protests, he's only 20 years old and a bit short on confidence.

"Na," he replies.

"I'm telling you," Whitten insists, "she fancies you."

So next thing Baker, testosterone levels near critical, is chatting to this attractive blonde.

"You're gorgeous Gary," she says, so Gary thinks he better say he's in love and then they're making plans. Back to my place? Too right. Where do you live? Not far.

Baker, thankful he's travelling with the great E.J. hails a cab, no worries. So Baker gets his frame nice and snug in the back seat with the blonde who keeps telling him he's cute, and putting her tongue in his ear; so Baker starts kissing like he's on an interstate footy trip.

Forty dollars later and Baker's still in passion mode, kissing and cuddling and whispering sweet nothings and anticipating.

"I really love you," she says, and he just happens to notice that they are out in the country passing a few thousand sheep, a horse or two, a couple of cows.

How much further? "Not far ... it'll be worth it."

Oh Boy. Enthusiasm restored, he's back in mode, kissing cars, rubbing noses, whispering sweet nothings and he wouldn't be telling you the truth if he wasn't getting just a little bit excited.

With \$45.00 on the meter and cows flying past like dollar coins, she's getting a bit anxious. The taxi swings into a drive and the meter clicks off at \$58.00. It's a farmhouse. The blonde leaps out and Baker, trembling with excitement, leans across to pay the driver who grabs his hand.

Eh? What's going on? The taxi driver whispers: "It's a bloke."

Baker's heart misses a beat. He starts coughing and spluttering and he's back in the taxi, flying past cows, trying to forget his lips are burning from all that kissing, trying to convince himself that she didn't have bleeps, that the taxi driver wasn't looking in the rearvision mirror, that the rash on the side of his face was an allergic reaction to make-up, that he wasn't about to climax a few times.

Trying to restore some moral order back into his life. Trying, \$55.00 later, \$108 round trip, and Baker arrives back at the hotel. Thanks Ted.

Back in Melbourne a few years later and Baker and senior members of the Melbourne football team are assembling in the

grounds of the MCG for a compulsory Sunday morning training run. The team lost by 20 goals the day before, which is about five more than they usually lost by, so gathered here are some of football's all-time forgettable names: "Judy" Giles, "Piggy" Walkers, Cameron "the safe" Clayton, "Colsey" Coles and "Snake" Baker.

Their coach, Carl Ditterich, reported for striking opponents a record 18 times and suspended for what seems like years, has devised a new training format.

The complex scheme is as follows: two senior players are to take training, but they must come up with something new, and they are not to tell the rest of the team the nature of their idea. Exciting stuff.

Carl instructs the two senior players that they must have the team back at the ground by 11.30am to sign autographs for the scholarship squad and their dads who are arriving by bus from the country.

The team assume that they are going to run around the "Tan" track which circles the beautiful Botanical Gardens, created by Ferdinand von Mueller in the 1850s. Historical site. White "Dreamtime" land.

But earlier that morning Giles, the club's centre half-back and Baker, its leading ruckman, headed into the gardens and placed 20 dozen slabbies packed with ice in a couple of green rubbish bins in a rotunda. So much for Ferdinand.

The players are doing some warm ups, and thinking: "Hello ... here goes another three laps of the Tan track in 45 minutes or else."

Meanwhile, back at the rotunda, the ice is melting, and a little stream of water is running from a leaking bin, down across a path and on to some rare exotic plants and flowers. Its source is puzzling two genteel, elderly women who are found sitting sedately in the rotunda.

The boys trot off with an ample sprinkling of red and blue on their singlets and guernseys. Melbourne supporters in their cars spot the colours, then their heroes: and start beeping their car horns: Beep, beep. "Good old Melbourne", "Up the Demons", Beep.

The young athletes feel a hot rush of adrenalin and understandable pride, and chest and ego expand and the pace is lively as they head toward the Anderson St. Bridge.

"We love you Piggy." And Piggy responds by dashing to the lead. "Beep, beep."

The mood is charged with feeling as supporters pay homage to their young team. "We love you Melbourne." "Come on Judy."

Now Judy breaks at the front, and quickens the pace. Egos near bursting, the 30 players

sprint dangerously towards the narrow footpath on the bridge. It's too late. Bodies collide screeching some players in the side careering across the road, while those at the front only avoid falling flat on their faces by sheer force of will.

Up the hill, with the sounds of horns subsiding, the players compose themselves and noticeably reduce speed, with Cameron "the safe" Clayton, wheezing horribly at the back of the pack. Just as the players are asking themselves what's new about this, Giles does a massive 90-degree turn straight into the Botanical Gardens. Three hours later and the Demons are plastered.

At 11.15am the players assemble outside the gardens, leaning on each other for support while singing an extremely poor rendition of "It's a grand old flag, it's a high-flying flag", the Melbourne Club song. With players unable to make it back to the ground, 12 are put in Hamilton's stationwagon and 18 in Giles's van, the two vehicles placed there earlier that morning. Two players who had refrained from taking refreshments drive the cars.

Just as the motorcade is pulling into the MCG car park, a bus carrying the scholarship squad and their dads arrive. "Oh gee Dad, look ... it's the team ... wow." When the car doors open bodies start falling out, some stumbling toward trees, others lay starting up at the sky.

Coles dragged Giles across towards the bus where a large group of excited autograph hunters are waiting. He grabbed the handrail but found it impossibly difficult to sign autographs with a stubby in his other hand. Giles meantime slides gently down the side of the bus with one young recruit commenting: "Dad, that's not Peter Giles."

Over his head it looked like someone had opened up with an assault rifle.

No-one saw Baker who was apparently trapped inside the van unable to find the door handle. So much for Carl's new training format. The whole thing turned out all right at the end with the club acknowledging privately that the players had been under enormous pressure and that Sunday had been specifically organised to ease the tension.

The players were very upset, naturally, at the embarrassment they had caused, but made up for it by playing the game of their lives the following week, losing by only five goals. For the record, Giles was best on the ground.

He is now happily married and lives somewhere in Victoria. Baker is now 42 years old and lives in Tasmania. He does occasional community work and gives generously to UNICEF, and like all good Australian stories this one gets better every time I hear it.

Overall in his VFL days Bob had a 32% winning record and attracted 7 Brownlow votes over his 25 games. He played with and against champions of Aussie Rules, was coached by legends of the game, and paid by the likes of Jim Cardwell and Ivan Moore, administrators of the Old School. And to think that Melbourne supporters Sir Billy Snedden and Kylie Minogue might've both been smitten by Bob, makes him purse his lips. Carry on Bob..

Throw in his post VFL days on a crook ankle playing with the very Aussie named Boronia, Murchison, Merrigum, and Kilcunda-Bass footy clubs in country Victoria, and you have a bloke with 3 flags from 5 senior Grand Finals, who kicked the ton five times and holds a couple of records at an AFL club.

