



Community Builder

Rugby is 'life' for Jodie

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What role do you play in your community group/activity/action?

I have been involved with the local Rugby League since 2006 and Rugby Union since 2007. I served on the Central Australian Rugby Football League (CARFL) Junior Committee from 2006-2008 and then joined the CARFL Board in 2009, volunteering with Aaron Blacker running the Senior and Junior competitions. I served on the CARFL Board as an Executive for 11 years including President in 2019 and was proud to be inducted as a Life Member of the CARFL in 2018 and have continued to serve on the general committee, helping out where I can.

In 2016 I started coaching junior rugby league, the most rewarding role I have had with the league. I was unable to coach this year due to my new job at CDU, however I hope to pick it up again next season as I have really missed it. In 2007, I joined the Dingo Cubs Rugby Union Football Club Committee, and held various roles over the years including Secretary, Treasurer, Events and General Committee. In Alice Springs, League plays in winter and Union over summer, with many of the same players and volunteers involved in both codes. I undertook a Sports Medicine Australia Course in 2007 and became one of two sports medics at the time for the Cubbies, a role I still undertake today. In 2021 I was proudly inducted as a Life Member of the Dingo Cubs RUFC along with my partner Richard Wehipeihana and best friend and fellow Sports Medic Heidi Blacker. I also undertake sports medic duties for the rugby league and over the years have done this for juniors and seniors. I am currently the Sports Medic for the Alice Springs Brothers Rugby League Football Club and enjoyed working with local Sports Medic legends Julianne Prior and Lisa Morgan at the Outback Marathon held in Yulara in July this year. My love of the league and union community means I am always happy to help with strapping or medic response for any player regardless of age or club in both codes.

Why is your community group/activity/action important?

Everyone knows the health benefits of sports



COACH: Jodie Summers doing what she loves, coaching kids at Rugby. 361251 Picture: SUPPLIED

and the value in keeping active - for kids and adults - however the most important thing that sport offers is the community it creates and the relationships you make

It also helps kids to feel valued and part of something. At the CARFL we welcome kids from all walks of life and we not only coach and support them in the game of rugby league but we help them learn important life skills such as teamwork, mateship, sportsmanship, effort equals reward, failure is a lesson and be humble in success. Since 2016, I have coached our Under 7s - think 20 x 6 and 7 years olds! A challenging age but I think the most fun! This is the first age group where tackling is introduced and I love teaching the kids how to get used to full contact, tackling and falling safely, the basic rules and techniques, and some of the basic strategies of the game - e.g. drawing in defence to open gaps for attack. I think these lessons give kids a lot of confidence in other areas of their life.

There is nothing more rewarding than watching a young child nervous, awkward and running the wrong way in their first game and then seeing them confidently scoring tries, making tackles and just having a great time in the Grand Final. The smile on their faces... I particularly love overhearing them give each other encouragement and 'tips'. I might be biased but in these younger age groups I think mums make the best coaches. They have the right balance of toughness, patience and nur-

ture to encourage and develop the kids through the season. I love hearing "Coach!" yelled out in excitement at the shops when they see me.

The Dingo Cubs RUFC (Cubbies) are special. A very family oriented and community minded club I have been extremely proud to be part of for over 16 years. The Cubbies have always demonstrated leadership in the game, taking on new players who have never played before, taking in people who are here on their own and giving them a family, and developing teenagers to play a game they love.

The best thing about the Cubbies though is their commitment to family and our local community. The club hosts family events through the year including 'Santa' visiting the Cubbies kids at the annual Family Christmas Party; volunteering for activities and events such as the Santa Ice Pole Treat run by APEX each year and other community activities such as in November last year where the boys rallied together with chain saws and trucks to help members of the community to clean up their homes and yards after the damaging microburst storm. They also undertake fundraising activities providing services to other local events such as the Duck Cup at the Camel Cup, Colour Smash, Boxing and Rodeos.

Why do you volunteer there (or why did you initiate the activity/response)?

I started with the Rugby League because my then five-year-old son had signed up to play. I was a single mum at the time, a passionate Queensland and Broncos supporter so got involved with the Junior committee and game day operations to help out. The close league community took me in and have been part of my extended family ever since.

With the Dingo Cubs, my close friend Aaron Blacker, who is now like a brother to me - and 'Uncle' to my two girls, played for the club. The need for sports medics was raised in a committee meeting so Aaron put his wife Heidi and I forward to undertake Sports Medicine training for the club, and there started my journey with Cubbies and Sports Med.

Being a volunteer sports medic is very rewarding, knowing you can help players who might not be able to play if you weren't there to tape up or treat injuries; and knowing you

are there to protect them and put their well-being first, even when they themselves or the coach don't care in the heat of the moment. They always thank you later.

I came to Alice Springs for three weeks and have now lived here for 26 years, one reason for that is that I couldn't leave my league and union family. They have become such a big part of me and the amazing life I have had here, and I am forever grateful.

What changes or achievements are you most proud of?

Coaching over 40 kids, including my two daughters, for over the past 9 years, seeing them grow and develop - in the game, their confidence and their interpersonal skills - has been amazing.

The amazing life I have given my kids by being part of the league and union community. We have no biological family living here but my kids have only known a big family with aunts, uncles, cousins, Nana, Poppy and their beloved Granny Lou. All family they have chosen here in Mparntwe and being part of rugby league and union.

With Aaron Blacker, running the league for 10 years and bringing the CARFL back to a strong competition and financial position. Something I hope we can all now do again!

At the NRL Coaches Conference, held in Sydney in 2018, and to my surprise, I was awarded the inaugural NRL Community Coach Recognition Award. Now, I don't think I deserved the award, but it was humbling and nice to know that someone saw how much I invested myself in coaching the kids, to have nominated me.

Final message: Volunteering is the number 1 most rewarding thing that you can do. Many sports in Alice Springs, not just the local league and union, are really struggling at association and club levels. I know we are all much busier now, myself included, but if one wants to see these games disappear. If you love your sport, please talk to them about how you can help.

If we all do our bit to keep community sports alive the investment will be small but the benefit to our community and the reward you will feel will be massive!

Faces of Australia

Ted Egan



Debating big issues with hermits of 'The Loo'

IN 1957 I was working as a Patrol Officer for Native Affairs Branch, Northern Territory Administration, in the days when the Territory was still run from Canberra. I had just spent six months helping to start the new "trading post" at Maningrida, in Arnhem Land and was then posted to Borrooloola, accompanied by my first wife Rae, my son Greg (3) and new daughter Margaret.

On the Macarthur River, Borrooloola was always called "The Loo". My duties were non-specific: I was the "government man" who issued rations to pensioners, did the weather reports, ran the daily radio "skeds", handled any situation under the heading: Aboriginal Affairs. There were about 500 First Australians in the region, plus about 20 white men, most of whom lived with Aboriginal women.

Race relations were harmonious, the principal differences being that First Australians did not have voting rights, nor were they allowed to drink alcohol; not that those things

mattered all that much in those days.

I'd been at "The Loo" for a week and an old white bloke asked me: "Are you going to the Church Service next Sunday?". I had been around a bit and knew that he wasn't talking about an actual church service, but a drinking session.

"Where does it happen?" I asked. He replied: "Under the mango trees at Albed Morcom's camp".

The next Sunday I joined the group of a dozen white blokes, all sitting on old army stretchers. A few Aboriginals were around, doing various tasks. An old bloke known as The Whispering Baritone, offered me a drink - a bottle of metho. I declined and thought: "This is a dero situation, I'll shoot through".

But suddenly the debate started. I forgot the topic on that first day, but I quickly came to realise that I was in the presence of a few great scholars, who would have been drinking Bollinger if they had any, but metho was their

last resort. Every Sunday thereafter I attended the scheduled debates, among the beneficiaries of the famous library that was once based at Borrooloola.

The debate topics were eclectic. The best I recall was The Relative Merits of Gray and Browning, a spirited battle won by The Grays after an emotional rendering of Gray's Elegy by Roger Jose, who had benefited from several terms in gaol since his arrival at The Loo in 1916.

Roger took delight in his massive, accumulated knowledge, from his "sheltered workshop" days, as he described imprisonment.

The library - 3000 books I was told - had been housed in the "cell" at the Police Station, where I currently lived. All of these white reprobates had spent time in the slammer, on charges like paddy-dodging, "cohabiting" with Aboriginal women, supplying alcohol etc. They were all "avid readers".

I learned that it was a local practice to have

a soubriquet. Aboriginal men had names like Virgil, Pompey, Nero, Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin. White men were more expansively named The White Stallion, The Reluctant Saddler, The Charters Flyer, The Mad Fiddler, The Freshwater Admiral etc.

Except for one bloke - the most learned of them all, the greatest character I have ever met in the NT, Roger Jose.

Roger did not have a nickname: he was generally respected by all. Yet one day I heard an outsider derisively refer to Roger as "that old Death Adder".

The comment incensed me, for I had established that Roger was indeed a fine scholar, a veritable historian on a wide variety of topics.

That started my songwriting career. I composed in 1957 my first-ever song in real terms: The title - Roger Was No Death Adder.

More next week. Aritjananga.