

Lavington Rugby League Team

Ray Gear

Rugby League is said to have been played in Albury from around 1924. Some twenty-eight years later, in September 1952, Lavington Rugby League Club was born at a meeting chaired by Robert B White, senior vice-president of Group 13.

At that meeting Bill Gough was appointed the Club's first President, with Messrs J Davies, M Clegg, A Freebody, R Gulson, J Hibbard, J Horsley, and K Lucas appointed to the committee.

Group 13 at this time was divided into first-grade and reserve-grade clubs. Because of the number of reserve-grade clubs, the Group was divided into two zones. Zone 1 consisted of first-grade clubs plus reserve-grade clubs (normally associated with a first-grade club) while Zone 2 consisted of reserve-grade sides or a town's second reserve-grade side. Depending on their playing strength clubs were promoted between Zone 1 and Zone 2.



Lavington Rugby League Team 1953
(Lavington & District Family History Society)

Six clubs formed the 1953 Zone 2 competition: Albury Roos, Bandiana, Henty, Lavington, Rand and The Rock. The season's match program was played over three rounds, each club playing the others three times.

Lavington, whose colours were black and gold, commenced its Rugby League career against Henty at Henty on May 3, 1953 with a 7 all draw. Lavington's first try was scored by Clive Hale, and the team was led by interim captain Ron Bartley.

Towards the end of May, Ron Purtell, a member of the Albury Blues Club, was appointed playing coach of Lavington. He transferred to the club at the start of June.

In 1953 the club played fifteen matches with seven wins, four losses, and four draws to finish the season in second position behind Bandiana. On August 30, 1953 Lavington and The Rock met at Albury in the semi-final of the Zone 2 competition, Lavington losing 8-6. A week later Bandiana defeated The Rock and became the Group 13 Zone 2 premiers for 1953.

Members of the Lavington side in 1953 included: Bill Barker, Ron Bartley, Body, J Brown, W Brown, D Browne, Caldwell, Roy Chadwick, Cliff Chapman, Colin Cooksley, A Dairs, John Davern, Mick Gilson, Wally Gorman, William Gough, Clive Hale, Handcock, R Harmer, K Hartley, Clarrie Hawkins, Kerry Heidke, Horsley, I Jebb, Kilpatrick, M Lawson, Pat McCarthy, V O'Brien, Barry Passant, Ron Purtell, Richardson, K Richter, Symonds, and Alan Yensch.