

Ron McGann – legend of football commentary

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Many will remember football commentator Ron McGann on radio 2AY. He commenced broadcasting senior Ovens and Murray League games around 1950. After being behind the microphone for 23 years, he called it a day at the end of the 1973 season. He had called 550 plus matches.



Ron McGann in the broadcast box
[Border Morning Mail, June 26, 1973].

In the early days of O&M broadcasts, regular caller Cleaver Bunton was heard over the airwaves on 2AY. By chance, one afternoon George Bunton, (Cleaver's brother) asked Ron to help him identify players. Ron did better than that, and Cleaver invited him to take over permanently.

Ron's love for Australian Rules began as a star winger with Chiltern. After a stint in the RAAF, he played in 1946 and 1947 with the red and whites in the now defunct Chiltern and District League.

Chiltern went down to North Albury in the 1946 Grand Final clash but atoned

against Howlong in the big one a year later. Ron played only a few games in 1948 before he was stricken with poliomyelitis. Along the road to recovery he spent two and a half years in Mooroopna Hospital.

Among the best Ron had seen in the O&M League were Wangaratta Rovers Bob Rose, North Albury's Stan Sargeant and Wodonga's Brian Gilchrist.

Albury of the late 1950s was his best team, with Peter Bartsch, Jim Robinson, Lance Mann, Jack Jones and John Stoney on the goal-to-goal line.

Foremost in his memory was Norm Benstead's 16 goals for North Albury against Corowa at the Albury Sportsground in 1951.

As a young boy at Bunton Park following North Albury Football Club around the 1960s, I stood beside Ron's commentary booth listening in awe to his faultless description of the match.

Ron had an uncanny way of describing general play. The grounds were often covered in ankle deep mud. Players became hard to identify, especially late in the game. This did not deter Ron's call. He could make a dull and lack lustre match sound exciting. His familiar catch phrase, "stacks on the mill," was used when an umpire was forced to bounce the ball when play became congested.

One thing that stood out during his commentary, was that he never forgot about his listening audience particularly all the sick people in hospital, he would send special greetings out to all the senior citizens listening on 2AY.

Ron is regarded as a legend of local football broadcasting. He left behind a wonderful legacy.