

VALE JIM UPFILL



It is with great sadness we acknowledge the passing of one of the Cheltenham Baseball Club's greatest members.

Jim joined the Club in the mid fifty's when he moved to Cheltenham with his wife Marie and their three young children. After enjoying a successful season of cricket at Cheltenham he agreed to join the then fledgling baseball club. Jim was a very good pitcher (nicknamed Bimbo) and he pitched the club to its first A Grade finals series in 1954 but unfortunately the side lost both finals as it did in 1955.

During the 55-56 Summer, Jim had health problems and was unable to play again but as coach he promoted a number of young players from the B Grade team and under his coaching was responsible for the start of Cheltenham's run of premierships. He demanded and received total commitment from the players both at practice as well as during game time. Being coached by one of the best rewarded the players. It was unfortunate his health restricted his playing days but he experienced great pleasure coaching youngsters to play good ball and was highly respected as one of the best managers in the D.B.A. Under his management, the A Grade team lost less than 10 games in four years winning successive flags in 1958, 59 and 60. His coaching and team selections was instrumental in the B and C Grade teams also winning flags

He also coached the D.B.A. carnival side with success and was highly respected by the other country association managers.

Forced to retire from coaching in 1966 through ill health he continually gave vital advice to his successors ensuring the club continued to prosper.

He was later one of the instigators of the amalgamation of the Prahran and Cheltenham clubs to form the Rustlers. He was the first Chairman of Selectors and his ability and diplomacy did much to aid the smooth transition of the amalgamation.

Two of his boys also served the club well both on and off the field. His grandson is a current player and coach. Both Jim and Colin hold life membership.

In the past few years Jim would sit in his car behind home plate and view the game for a while. In his own style he would add his views on how the team was playing!

The Club will be ever indebted for his dedication to Cheltenham and to Baseball, and will always be fondly remembered especially by those close to him in the early years of the club.

Mr A Burdett