

May 2, 2010

Ross “Nut” Hazel Memorial Game

Spectators packed the grandstand, lined the fence and roared encouragement when the Sarina Golden Oldies ran onto the field to take on the Barcaldine boys in Barcaldine on Sunday for the inaugural Ross “Nut” Hazel Memorial football game which was held in conjunction with the town’s Tree of Knowledge Festival.

Nut Hazel was one of Sarina and Barcaldine’s most loved and respected rugby league footballers who recently passed away.

As a tribute to his contribution to the sport and life in general, over 20 past Sarina footballers and team mates made the trip to Barcaldine to take part in the game.

Nut, along with a number of other Barcaldine boys including, Parker Dancey, Selwyn Fogarty and Nut’s two other brothers, had been poached straight from Barcaldine Under 16 sides in the 70’s by Sarina’s Alf Abdullah to work for the railway and play football for the club.

At Sarina, Nut played in the Queensland Under 18 representative side and got a number of offers from Sydney clubs, in time he played alongside other former Sarina greats such as Dale Shearer and Martin Bellah and was part of the winning team which finally won a premiership for the club in 1983 after 34 years of drought.

On Sunday, many of his former team mates from both Barcaldine and Sarina travelled long distances to pull on a jersey and “run on for Nut”.

The Sarina side was made up of Coach and captain, Gary Craig, Glen Mooney, Max Evans, Max McFadzen, Syd Hale, Daniel Micallef, Steven Dickson, Paul Harris, Steven Craig, Frank Odgen, Ken Spannagle, Gary “China” Marks, Kevin “Rabbie” Russel, Colin “Floater” Hansen., Peter Wiseley, Steven “Walkabout” Hazel, Steve Hart and Selwyn “Nappie” Fogarty.

Barcaldine struck early in the game with Dennis Ogden crossing the line for the home side and David Kerrigan converting.

Things were starting to look grim for Sarina when Roy “Yogi” Thompson put the ball over the line for Barcaldine again to secure 10 nil lead.

However, Sarina regrouped in the break and looked very dangerous from the start of play. It wasn’t long before Paul Harris went over the line for Sarina and Steven Craig successfully converted the try to close the gap.

Barcaldine continued to cop a fair bit of pressure on the try line and it was only a knock on by Sarina which saved them.

However, Geoffrey Rafter made a big break for Barcaldine, going by himself, he sprinted to the line and scored, what the announcer declared as the try of the day.

Rafter failed to convert and Sarina went back on the attack.

Sarina’s, Paul Harris ran straight over the top of winger, Oscar Dancey, who was being put under enormous pressure from the sledging he was receiving from the announcer, to score.

Sarina failed to convert and at the final bell Barcaldine were the run out winners, 16 – 10.

Nut's two children Tina and Kieran Hazel had also travelled to Barcaldine to be on hand to present the inaugural shield to the winning side.

Glen Mooney, Steven Craig and Stephen Hazel were named as Barcaldine's players' "Players of the Match".

Organisers, Geoff Rafter, Parker Dancey and Dave Kerrigan, said the match was a huge success with the players not only enjoying taking to the paddock but also catching up over the weekend.

They said they, and the town, were very appreciative of the Sarina side's efforts to travel to Barcaldine and ensure the match was a fitting tribute to Nut.

Sarina's, Kim Hazel said the Sarina boys are looking forward to Barcaldine returning the visit where they will ensure they will reverse the final score.

Most of the Sarina boys stayed on in Barcaldine to take part in the Festival's May Day Parade.

Kim Hazel also ran two of his goats in Australia' richest goat races held in the town on the Monday.

Following the Nut Hazel Memorial game, a Central West Under 16 representative side took on Central Highlands. The 10-all closing score was indicative of the closeness of the game.

The Tree of Knowledge Memorial Shield saw Barcaldine take on Winton in the senior game.

Last year saw the Central West premier's, Barcaldine win the shield off Longreach, however this year they weren't so lucky.

Winton scored in the last 10 seconds of the game and kicked the goal after the hooter, to win 28 – 26.

A band played 'til late after the games and no doubt the stories and the beers flowed as the Sarina and Barcaldine old boys tried to ignore their bruises and battle scars.

Wisley getting smashed

The Two Teams – Barcaldine and Sarina



Geoff Rafter accepts the Ross "Nut" Hazel memorial trophy on behalf of the winning side, Barcaldine from Ross' children Tina and Kieran

