



Our Field Of Dreams

By Smokie Dawson

Most of us would be familiar with the 1989 movie *Field of Dreams*, in which Iowa farmer Ray Kinsella makes the unlikely decision to build a baseball diamond in his corn field. Played by Kevin Costner, in one of his finest film performances, Kinsella is urged on in his quest by a voice which whispers "If you build it, he will come". To the realist the film is complete nonsense: an obscure mishmash of spiritualism and time-travel, with an enigmatic plot that borders on inscrutability. But for anyone willing to suspend their disbelief, the film is ultimately rewarding in a Hollywood feel-good fashion.



I was 23 when I first saw the film and, being sports-crazy, my first instinct was to ponder how a local version might look: an Australian rules footy oval somewhere in the outback, with perhaps the ghosts of John Coleman and Norm Smith playing starring roles? By extension, I wondered how cool it would be to have an oval in my backyard. But I suddenly realized that I did have my own field of dreams, which at the time I was fortunate enough to run out onto every second Saturday in winter. And that field was called the Fearon Reserve.

There is a forward-pocket on the Osborne St side from which it is impossible to kick goals. It is bookended by famished trees which hungrily swallow Sherrins. Disconcertingly for visiting teams, it does not have a fence around the boundary-line, affording us home spectators the opportunity to express our views from even closer quarters. Late in the season, it will show the effects of over-use. And we have outgrown the clubrooms, which burst at the seams in the post-match ruminations. But the ground is ours, and we are notoriously tough to beat there, as Old Carey will find this week. "We never lose on our own shit-heap," as a crusty former coach often reminded us.

The Fearon has seen relatively little footy in the past two Covid-affected years. And without wanting to trivialize any of the devastation which the pandemic has wrought, one of the things I have missed so keenly is watching the CY's playing football at our home. The simple, joyous sense of normality which footy at the Fearon brings can never be underestimated. This Saturday's opening match of the season brings with it an anticipation and longing built up over many more months than usual. It must feel to players and coaches alike that the pre-season has dragged on forever. How they must be looking forward to the prospect of a real game day.

Of the lessons that the past two years have taught us, many do surround the enjoying of moments, the experiencing of pleasure in the little things. So, I would urge players and spectators alike, when we gather this weekend at our home, to stop for a moment and take in the surroundings. Ray Kinsella dreamt up the crazy idea of a baseball field amongst his corn. We do not have to imagine, it is right there waiting for us. The Fearon, The "Fez", our very own field of dreams.