

## Ivo Mol - Life Member

Ivo currently plays in our Division 2 mens side, fills in for our Division 1 Mens and is doing his best to coach our Division 3 Women (thank you for your perserverence with this, Ivo!) & is also one of our Life Members.

Ivo kindly shared a little of his story with us....

I first started playing hockey when I was in year 6 or 7 at High School, so 13 or 14 years old. Mr Smith, the soccer coach, was keen to have me play soccer on the weekend. However Mum wouldn't let me as soccer was played on the Sabbath. (We're from good Protestant stock you know). At the time Wayne "Red" Sheppard was actively promoting hockey at Albury High where he organised a lunch-time comp so I tried it and liked it.

I remember my first stick clearly. They didn't have the left-handed one I wanted but I settled on one with as much weight as possible in the head and a nice flexible whippy shaft, the total opposite to what I look for in a stick now. I learnt my skills chasing long balls down the right wing on grass fields.



I played juniors for PCYC. Towards the end of high school Dave Allen, Max Sheppard and maybe some others started a new club, East Albury, and I was asked to join. We promptly won the Division 1 premiership. It's all so easy when you're young and you expect it will always be like that.

In those days playing against Falcons was like playing Murder Ball. They were a bunch of thugs back then, at least that was my perception. I'd never consider playing for them!

I went to NSW Uni from 1980-82. Focused more on hockey than study. The head coach there was the Australian keeper at the time so there were some good players around to learn from. I remember one game where Rowan Dick, who also played for Australia, was injured so they took him off after he had scored 5 goals in the first half.

When I came back to Albury I had a season with YA's but wasn't happy there. My youngest brother, Taco, was playing with Falcons and so I came across the next year. That's when I met Laddie, he was old then!

I played a bit of rep hockey for the school and Riverina. We went to Dapto for the State Championships. Woop Woop! Other than that didn't play much rep hockey until Masters.

I'd broken my ankle in a motorbike accident at Uni and by my mid 30's it was so sore after a game I was still limping on Wednesday, when it was time for training. At that stage I gave the game away.

A few years later I got a phone call from Laddie. There was a masters comp starting up and did I want to have a run? In the years I'd been away the fields had improved and my ankle had improved and I haven't looked back. Every game since then has literally been a bonus, thanks to Laddie.

I got involved in the Australian Masters Championships in about 2004, give or take. Initially with a Vic Country team, then Vic Division 2 and eventually the Division 1 team. I've played Masters Tournaments in Launceston, Hobart, Melbourne, Perth, Gold Coast, Canberra and Adelaide. This year is Hobart again. I've also represented HAW at Stakehouse Cup & Country Championships.

I was awarded Life Membership with Falcons Hockey Club in 2011, and it was a complete surprise. The years I had out of the sport made me realise how much I missed it and how important the whole team sport culture was. I was just happy to contribute where I could, mainly coaching juniors and organising the Division 2 Mens side for a while. Just happy to share my love of the game really.

I remember thinking "They can't give me that, I'm not finished yet".



**Ivo running onto the field for the Div 2 Mens final 2016**

The game of hockey has changed over the years. I remember when:

- We played on grass
- You rolled the ball in from the sideline, underarm.
- You could stop the ball in the air with your hand.
- Sticks were made of wood & cane and had a long hook.
- Offside was a rule when I started.

I love the modern rules though, it's a much more open, free-flowing game now.

**Ivo - top row, third in from right -  
Division One Mens Grandfinal  
winners 2012**



What keeps me playing hockey? It's essential, mentally and physically. It's being part of something bigger than myself, the feeling of being good at something. It's 70 minutes where all the aches & pains disappear and you get lost in the moment. Other sports can provide the personal fitness but hockey, Falcons, is a community.

The other thing that keeps me playing is that there is always something new to learn. The tomahawk, slap hit, overhead are all new skills. I especially love when some-one I've coached as a junior teaches me something new. Then some-one like John Jewell comes along and challenges everything you think you know about the game. I credit John with rekindling my interest in hockey.

I really enjoy the Masters now. Every year I meet up with people I played with at UNSW as well as team-mates and players from other states that you see from year to year. In Adelaide I was warming up for a game when a fellow came up to the fence & said "You don't remember me", which was true of course. Turned out to be Chris Garner who I played with when I first joined Falcons. Hadn't seen him in 30 odd years.

I remember warming up for a Division 1 game one sunny afternoon. Fergus & Tommy Tennison and a few others were complaining about being hung over from a 21st birthday party the night before. That day was my 42nd birthday! I spent my 50th birthday at a mid week make-up game in the teeming rain on ground 2. The things we do!

I remember some particular games or moments but at the end of the day it's the people I have played with & against that provide the best memories of my year of hockey. And that includes Suzy.

Sue started playing hockey when she watched me play at Corowa one day. I was warm in my shorts & shirt & she was freezing in her jumpers & coat so she figured there must be something in this hockey. Falcons have been a big part of our life together and I certainly could not have done what I have in hockey without Sue's support, and forbearance.

Do I have any rituals before I play? No rituals I don't think. But I do like to have something new for a big game. Maybe a hair cut or new sweat bands, something like that. It doesn't work of course but...

