



**NORTH SYDNEY D.R.L.
REFEREES' ASSOCIATION**

NSDRLRA

Life Member Profile

Brian Barry

Life Member 17: 1967

Membership: before 1960



Honours

Life Membership: 1967

Graded Referee: 1967 - 1972

Junior Reps:

John Quinn Trophy: 1966

Refereeing Accreditation: level 5

Executive Positions Held

Vice President, Honorary Secretary, Assistant Secretary and Social Secretary

Association Positions Held

Honorary Auditor, Appointments Board, Junior Referee Support, Coaching Coordinator, Coaching Staff, Representative to the Judiciary, Life Membership Committee, Jubilee Committee, Past & Present Committee and 75th Anniversary Committee

Comments - Toast to the Pioneers of the Association (2012) by Brian Barry

Mr Chairman, distinguished guests, visitors, members of the board, ladies and gentlemen, my name is Brian Barry. I am a life member of the North Sydney Referees. I am in deed grateful to the members of the committee for the honour bestowed on me to respond on behalf of the pioneers of the association. I would also like to thank Mr Tom Murphy, for the manner in which he spoke about our pioneers.

The word pioneer in the dictionary, is one who originate any enterprise, I am sure when these men met on that night they had no idea that 90 years on... we would be here tonight to pay respect to their achievements, by starting the North Sydney Referees Association.

I have the opportunity now to look back and say thank you. There must have been something in the fruit those early days because it was also in a fruit shop that this game of rugby league was first thought of in 1908. Coming here tonight it was good to see some old faces who were referees in my

days, getting to know the young fellows. I am sure that this Association will be going for a long time to come.

Tom mentioned various names he found while looking through his computer so if I say them again I am sorry. Lal Dean who was one of those 6 men. He was a founding member of the association. Ray Symth our first association president for 12 years. Later surpassed in the latter years by John Montgomery, Brian Minnett, current president Michael Quaily and the one and only Frank Hyde. The man who knew the rule book back to front. Tom Bellew, and Earl Carroll who refereed 14 grand finals in a row and has an association trophy named after him. Please forgive me if I missed anyone, but it is hard to squeeze everyone in.

When I joined, our fees were huge! Well so I thought, 9/6 Shillings around 54 today. I got 10 shillings for my first grand final and i thought i was in the big time. The meetings were held every week, we left the school of arts hall, when the Leagues club bought a two story house in Merlin Street, Neutral Bay. The club was downstairs, upstairs they held board meetings. We would hold our meetings there also, Then after the Express way was built, they bought the land at Cammeray, so in the latter years we would meet there.

We were having trouble getting Referees in the 60s so we decided to try schools. Marist Brothers, St Leos, Mosman, Asquith all came to the party, from these schools we were able to help quite a number of students get their referees' ticket.

North Sydney was the first to have school boy referees controlling fixtures, and soon other associations would follow. Some stayed with us getting their senior ticket, a couple that come to mind are Steve Bets, John Byrne, Martin Ryan, Brian Daveron, David Lombardo. David came close to Earle Carroll's record of 14 with 5 grand finals with North Sydney. He then went on to Manly and would do another 5 there an outstanding achievement. He now plays senior soccer and have been told has twin boys, so they may certainly be referee material judging by their dads achievements.

We would have a smoko at the end of the season and other associations would say ours was one of the best. We had kept our numbers down to 300, and these functions were held at the North Sydney Anzac Club, 'Quinny' had a band in those days and would supply the music. John would play the drums. They were no Glenn Miller let me tell you. We did all the catering, fresh prawns, salad and bread rolls, plus hot food. The entertainment was a comedian, only once did we have a stripper and did we have trouble with the crowd that night!

For the junior members we would put on a dinner where they could bring their parents and partners, a guest speaker would attend these functions too. we have a saying in Refereeing, "If you cannot be a good referee, pleasantry and look like you know what you are doing". You can read, study the rules of the game, train every day, but the only person who can make you a good referee is yourself

and believe me it does get easier with experience, and that is something you cannot buy or study for.

I owe this association, this is where I learned how to become a professional referee, coming through the junior ranks, gaining grade honours in 1958, going on to be appointed a centre referee in first grade in 1963. Then whilst a touch judge, I did grand finals in all grades, city country, New South Wales v Queensland, World Cup and even a test between New Zealand and Australia. I was able to participate in all of this all through my connection with the New South Wales Rugby League Referees Association who I would like to say a big thank you too.

To finish, I would like to pay a special tribute to a man who I am proud to call a true friend, The late Mr John Quinn, Mr rugby league in motion, his wife Mary once told me once he would go to bed with a football as a pillow and a referee's whistle in his pyjama pocket! They broke the mould when he was born, there was no one like him.

I met John when I joined in 1954 and our friendship grew and was cemented then. You could write a book about John's life, this fellow was a true pioneer. John was involved in the North Sydney Rugby League Referees Association, the North Sydney District Rugby League Football Club, the NSWRL Junior League Association and the North Sydney Junior Rugby League for over 50 years. Not many people can claim the honour of life membership to one association but to be made a life member of all 4 of the above organisations is testament to the hard work that he has done. Mr Quinn was well respected by all that knew him and there was never an unkind word said about him.

John was a quiet man who loved rugby league, he loved being around the kids and is well remembered by many older players as the kind man who refereed them when they were playing Under 7's and beyond. It always made me smile when I saw kids, teenagers and grown men always refer to John as "Mr Quinn" or "Father Quinn". Others affectionately called him JQ. He was certainly a father figure to many involved in the game not just in North Sydney but across the whole of Sydney. I know that he always loved to be called by those three names. The smile would light up his face. Of course John did not always remember your name but he could definitely remember your playing number and your club and would often refer to you as "Hello number 5".

John never had a nasty word to say about anyone and instead would look for a positive in everyone that he met. His hours and hours of voluntary work for all of the above associations were priceless. He filled every role that you can imagine in the North Sydney Referees and Junior League.

He would do countless kilometres travelling from ground to ground to check on his 'charges' whether they were the referees or the junior league players and officials. He was the District Representative Manager and always looked after his "boys" and made sure that they were ready to give their best no matter who the opposition was. He spent time as the team manager with the senior grades at

Norths and was well liked by the senior players. He would turn a deaf ear to the coaches when they dropped the swear words and pretend that he didn't hear. He was the caring person who picked up the spirits after a loss and was smiling from ear to ear when we had a win.

John was a mentor to a lot of people involved in the game and his counsel was greatly appreciated by all that sought it. He never played the political game that is so often present in rugby league and instead was looked upon as a peaceful man who was a good mediator. He was there when friends needed a shoulder to cry on or a helping hand in any situation. Nothing was ever a problem to him.

John used to do the Christmas evening Santa run, where he would drive to houses of people that he knew and leave bags of Christmas lollies for the kids. He was the rock that supported so many of his colleagues and friends in their hour of need when their loved ones passed away. He was the confidant that so many turned to for support and advice. He was a great friend who never asked for anything but was always prepared to give plenty.

During the 80s. He came to me to ask if his plan came true, would I be a member of the new Junior League Judiciary Committee. His idea was to have a member of the legal fraternity as a chairman, like they have in the NRL. He got this through and North Sydney was the first junior association to adopt his structure. It is now the template for every junior league association. I am sure that in years to come there will be a trophy for John and I know that any referee who has his name on it will feel pretty proud to have it on his mantle.

Our first chairman was Mr John McKinn who held that position for 10 years. Sadly John got very ill due to cancer and had to give up his position. Before his departure he chased Mr Geoff Bellew who accepted the role, serving for 12 years before retiring in 2011 to take up position as a judge in the Supreme Court. I might add that both John and Geoff were ex-referees with the association, the other member from the referees was Bill Lalor who was there for 19 years.

Ladies and gentlemen I would like you all to stand and raise your glasses to the pioneers, and one we all hold close to our hearts, Mr John Quinn and I am hoping with God's blessing we will be able to come together for the 100th Year of the North Sydney Referees Association. Thank you all for being good listeners and I am indeed truly grateful for the honour bestowed upon me tonight as the spokesperson for our pioneers. Enjoy the rest of your evening.