

Gary Wallace CROFT

A Legend in Touch circles, Gary was one of the originals. He started playing Touch when it first began in 1968 at Maroubra with the South Sydney team alongside the “Father and Mother” of Touch, Ray Vawdon and Bob Dyke.

He remained actively involved at Park, Regional and State Level right up to recently when his illness he has battled made it difficult for him to make his way down to his beloved Doyle Park and Parramatta Touch Association.



On moving his family to Fairfield a few years after he commenced at South Sydney, he joined Parramatta District Touch Association as a player. Gary quickly became involved in the coaching side of the game and began to become an active committee member with the Affiliate. As a coach, he had many successes at the Sydney Championships, Vawdon Cups, State Cups, and Junior State Cups. Similarly, at a National Touch League level, he was a stalwart of the event, right from inception and before this at the old NSW Regional Titles.

He was the President of Parramatta Touch for 28 years before which he was he was Vice President for two years. He spent some 30 years at the top of the blue and golds as the leader. During this time, he faced numerous challenges of leadership, with health issues, lack of volunteers and the daunting task of reviewing and changing the governance of the Association from a company limited by guarantee to an Incorporated non for profit Association. Not easy for a man from the old school! Gary worked tirelessly for Parramatta Touch, on many occasions single handily and has been the heart and soul of the Association for many years. He was a man who was at his happiest when he could assist in the development of young players, teaching them the fundamentals and aiding their growth into potential champions.

If having his hands full in running a successful affiliate wasn't enough, Gary also put up his hand to head up the old Region 9 as Regional Director. Then oversaw the transitioning to the Sydney Scorpions. He had two stints as Regional Director, the first for six years at region 9 and then with the Scorpions for another 12 years. A total of 18 years all while running an affiliate. He continued to be a loyal supporter of the Scorpions and has assisted by coaching various ladies' divisions for the Region both at Senior and Open levels over that time. During his time as Director, he was also forced to take on the role of Finance Director. Both at Region 9 and the Sydney Scorpions due to the lack of volunteers. He did this to ensure the Region survived. It was on the back of the efforts of Gary Croft that the Sydney Scorpions survived to develop into the force it is today.

Fittingly in 2005 Gary was awarded the NSWTA Volunteer of the Year. He also represented NSW as both a Coach and Assistant coach for state teams over many years. He has always contributed to NSWTA through his Affiliate and his Regional contributions and his coaching activities.

Not only were his contributions recognised by the awarding of Life Membership of the NSWTA, but also, he was recognised by the naming of the Croft Cup in his honour. A trophy that recognises the best-performed Affiliate throughout the rounds of the Vawdon Cup. The Sydney Scorpions also have the Croft Medal which is presented to their Best & Fairest Scorpions Medal winners from Senior and Mixed Open teams competing at the National Touch League.

A Legend of our game has gone, sadly Gary passed away in 2020 leaving a great gap in the sport. A man who was there in 1968 when the game we all love was born. A man who has loved and participated in our game, at every level and in every role for some 52 years. Goodbye old friend in Touch yours was a life well-lived.

