

Piers Lewis

CONGRATULATIONS ON 100 GAMES

- **Lewie what does playing 100 games for the UFC mean to you?**

It means I have not injured my aging body once again. It also puts into perspective what freaks of nature guys like \$8 and Growdy were. I mention Growdy as with his body he shouldn't have reached double figures, let alone 200 odd.

- **This will be the third time you have been picked this year for your 100th. After a Thursday night ankle injury, and a work commitment ruled you out previously, was there any fear you would join greats such as ex eagle Paul Symmons in the 99 game club?**

As I am writing this Felix, I still have a hamstring that is almost as tight as the other one, a dodgy left ankle after season 1994, a dodgy right ankle after Gazelle managed to move my considerable body weight purely onto that ankle, and a left shoulder that is surprisingly sore whenever it goes above head height.

If I make it past Thursday night, the selection axe, Saturday's warm up, across the white line it will be a miracle I thought I would never experience.

And all you young dingoes that think I am just an unfit sicknote, I don't think I missed one game between 1994 – 2000 through injury. So this is what you have to look forward to unless you are an aforementioned freak.

- **Who are the coaches you have had in your time at the club and can you tell us a bit about each of them?**

1994 – Simon Growden. What an induction to the UFC! Growdy was a considerable talent as a coach. The 1994 flag we won was nothing short of miraculous. We lost to Bassendean somewhere near round 11, who were ordinary. Growdy said we would not lose another game that season and we didn't. We won 13 straight, sneaking into the top 5 and beating Edith Cowan in the GF by about 8 points at East Fremantle Oval. Growdy somehow got us playing good footy and drinking more than I had ever experienced in my life. What a year.

1995 – Howard Styles – Another flag with Howdy, and it was another fantastic year down at UFC. I believe A & B Colts went back to back, so we had some good players down the club. Howdy, with that Godfather like raspy voice, was a great leader and made you work very hard. I don't think I've done more hill sprints than with Howdy. Turning up Tuesdays was very hard mentally. Another great bunch of blokes and many from that team are still good mates now.

1996 – Piers Lewis – Player / coach in 1996. Coach understood my ability and played me in the forward pocket every week.

1997 – Eric Feathers – Goose had bizarre inspirational half time or pre-game talks I've ever come across. One week we had a Monkey reading ANZAC poems or something. Good season though and a lot of fun. Played with some interesting characters like Sparkler, Cappy and \$8 to mention a few.

1999 & 2000 Andrew Mason – Mase – hard at the yaggot. This is where my memory of the Dingoes begins. I am not sure what year we were born, but it would have been 99 or 2000 I'd have thought. Mase was a player / coach and did a magnificent effort. We were a well organized, disciplined team, which considering players like Willy Belbin & Krusty were playing, was quite an achievement. Obviously 2000 still hurts.

▪ **Can you give us a few highlights both on and off the field since being at the club?**

On the field, has to be the flags in 94 and 95, along with a memorable win out near Collier Park golf course in 99. I played for a 50m penalty and got it, then speared a pass onto Growdy's chest who expertly bounced it off his chest to Woodsy who dobbed it with a mongrel of a kick from 45m with 10 seconds to go to put us 2 pts up.

Off the field. My first ever bus trip was out to Swan Athletic with Growdy's B-colts. Not only did we beat them by 10 goals in their own jumpers but the bus trip home was a life turning experience. Woke up with a witch's hat, toilet seat, 3 pool balls and a flag stick. Must have been a top night.

▪ **Why did you come to the Great UFC? Given that your last game was in 2000, and you may now have the record for the longest gap between 99 and the milestone, what brought you back?**

Mainly as most of my mates were going down so I went along. Never thought of any other club and I was pretty sure Claremont were not interested.

March 2001 I moved to London and I returned in March 2008. I didn't play last year due to the time pressures of parenthood. I came back to see if I could still play footy.

▪ **Tell us about that 2000 season?**

Mase's dingoes were a really good outfit. We were undefeated going into the GF but we had only beaten Melville by a lucky 3 points at home, and 4 goals away. Melville did us by around 10 points (with a couple of faces we'd never seen before) and I still remember the game vividly. To go undefeated until the GF is a feeling you should never experience. It will haunt me forever.

▪ **What would you say are the biggest differences between the modern game and the majority of your playing career? Is there any room for the drop kick these days?**

I am concerned about the modern game. Watching on tv with the rolling zones and 90 interchanges a game, I was wondering if I had the mental capacity to keep up with it. Time will tell if I am in the bygone era. I know where my body is at.

- **Lewie is a fairly unimaginative nickname – are there any others with stories attached?**

Whitfords FC really disliked me for some reason. When we were playing finals one year and they had the week off they came to watch us. Whenever I touched the ball they would yell out “Igor”. They thought it was funny, I am not really sure why. I imagine their bus trips must be a riot.

- **Greatest player you have seen to pull on the UFC Jumper?**

Cheesy or Mods I would say.

I brought Cheesy down to the club as he was getting friendly with my flat mate Belinda. His first game for the dingoes was Wanbro and Mase played him in the back pocket. Easily BOG, with mark of the year from back pocket was quite an effort. Played the GF with a broken hand as well.

Mods was my full forward the 2nd year I coached B-colts ('98 I think). Must have taken 25 marks that would've made his namesake proud and booted close to 80 goals I think. A talent that was probably a bit better than b-colts, but we managed to keep him the whole year.

- **Greatest UFC team you have been involved with?**

Tough question. For talent I'd have to say either the 2000 or 2009 Dingoes.

- **Greatest Victory you have been involved in?**

The 1994 GF was the most physically punishing game I've ever played. I'd always heard finals were a different level, and this game proved it. Every player gave everything they had. When we won it was a sense of relief more than ecstasy. I couldn't have gone on for another minute.

- **Who is the Most Memorable Player you have played with and why?**

Too hard to split 3: Jez O'Neil, Willy Belbin or Al Craib. Jez O'Neil was our captain in 94 and was pure inspiration – went walkabout after that season? Willy was a complete nutter on and off the field, but was as hard as they come. Craiby took to the sport late but was my captain in 96 and was fearless at the footy and hilarious to watch doing a funnel.

- **Who do you sit next to on the bus trips both there and back?**

A good tactic is to sit next to someone important on the way back, usually the poo-bah or fines master. They seem to avoid drinks better than anyone else.

- **Who do you sit next to in the change rooms?**

None in particular, near either the bin or carton of beer.

- **Favorite Movie, Food, Beverage?**

Dodgeball, Chinese, Red wine.

- **Tell us about Stevie Munday's skills in the kitchens (re chocolate muffins)?**

Good research Felix. I believe it was his girlfriend's cooking more than Stevie himself. It was after our loss in the finals in 99 at Claremont Oval. I usually don't like to eat the morning before a game so by the time the game is over I am starving.

I wasn't really listening, but I heard Stevie say something about chocolate muffins so went straight for them and gleefully stuffed a couple down the gob. Being a little naïve meant that by 9pm that night I was sitting in my car in the car park at Claremont Oval paranoid as hell. My girlfriend/wife picked me up and drove me home and I remember looking out my window at the traffic lights and seeing this guy riding one of those lying down bicycles. I was thinking that Stevie's muffins were making all sorts of things happen but apparently it was just some weirdo riding that contraption in the middle of the night.

- **Funniest situation on the field?**

One that sticks out was a game against Bassendean at McGilvray, probably '95. Opposition teams tend to dislike me on the field for some reason, and Bassendean were no different. They had a really good centre half forward called Dudeck, that was starting to dominate so I took it upon myself to stir him up a little. He looked the stereotypical crazy bogan so I didn't think it would be hard. I can't remember exactly what I said to him but before I knew it he had me on the ground and was head butting me repeatedly.

The plan worked and he got sent off and was suspended for 8 weeks I believe. I think the speed bumps at McGilvray may have been put in after the burn out he did once he got sent off. Fond memories.

- **What would you say are the strengths of your game?**

I use to be a good kick at goal. Assume that is still the case.

- **And the weaknesses?**

Durability, fitness generally and weight. At school I was 67kgs, I am not anymore.

- **Where do you see yourself in 5,10 and 20 years?**

Not playing footy. Might have another crack at coaching one year in that timeframe if I am lucky.

- **Word Association. What do you think of when I say the following?**

Simon Growden - Rubber Chest

Neil Donaldson – Generous sponsor = top man

Bus Trip – Funnel

Pies – My name without the R

Tommy Calder – 0.5 second sub

Cheesy – Mix of Peter Daicos & Glenn Robbins

Warnbro (Navel base and Cappy's old man) – Charming

Best of luck for your 100th game and let's celebrate with a great win!