

Geelong Advertiser

Geelong

Geelong's former Corio Oval could be named after David Hickinbotham as family pushes for acknowledgment

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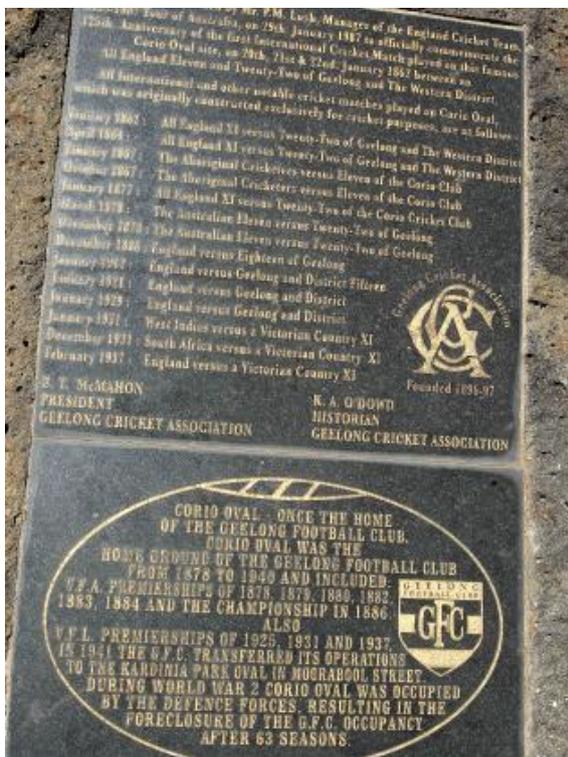


Michael Hickinbotham, MP Richard Marles and Cats vice-president Bob Gartland are pushing for Corio Oval to be renamed in honour of Dave Hickinbotham. Pictures: Alison Wynd

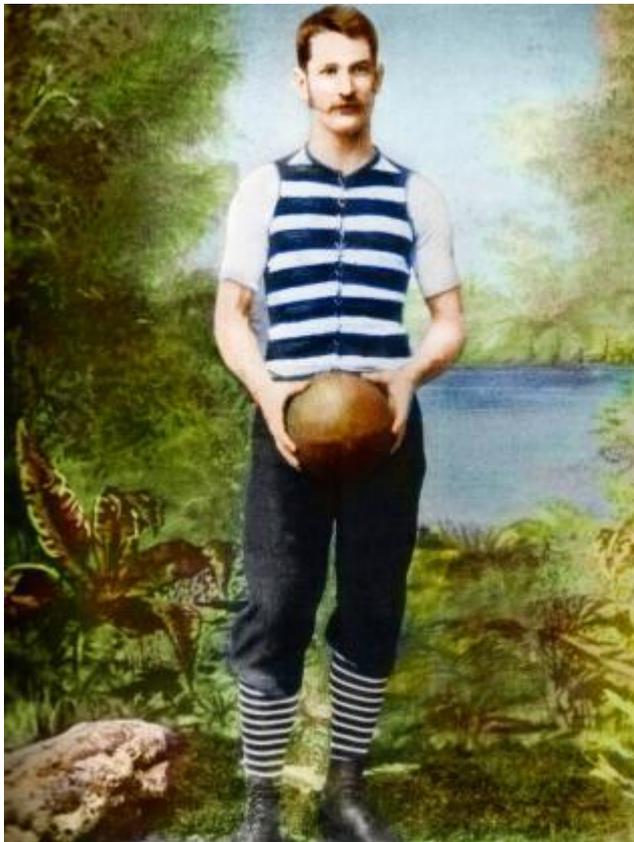
MICHAEL Hickinbotham grew up knowing the formidable legend of his great-grandfather, Geelong Cats great Dave and hopes one of the city's sacred sporting domains will soon carry his name.

Mr Hickinbotham, of Adelaide, has added his vital voice to a passionate push by Corio MP Richard Marles to have a ground near the site of Geelong's former Corio Oval christened Dave Hickinbotham Oval.

Family support might prove crucial underpinning Mr Marles' submission which is already with the City of Greater Geelong.



A plaque marking the site of the former Corio Oval.



1880s Geelong Cats player Dave Hickinbotham.

Eastern Park's former Corio Oval, near the present site of Geelong Convention Centre, was home of the Geelong Football Club for 63 years, including the halcyon 1880s when Dave Hickinbotham was an heroic player, skipper and arguably the club's first coach.

Fast, skilful, aggressive and fair, the centreman captained Geelong's famous team of 1886 which reigned unbeaten for the season and figured in the grand final triumph against South Melbourne hailed as the game of the century.

Geelong won seven Victorian Football Association premierships in nine years while based at Corio Oval.

The feat and the site is now marked by a rock monument but Mr Marles wants an unnamed nearby Eastern Park oval bordering Holt Road to acknowledge the Hickinbotham legacy and the significance of Corio Oval to the city's sporting story.

He has raised the issue in federal Parliament.

Michael Hickinbotham said the call had been welcomed by the family.

"It's a lovely gesture on the part of Richard Marles, the Member for Corio and I'd hope the Geelong city council would come on board," Mr Hickinbotham said.

"We grew up with stories about him having led the club to become champions of Australia who established a new brand of professionalism and his innovative approach in football which set the club up to win a number of flags."

Geelong Cats vice-president and Honouring the Past committee chairman Bob Gartland was pleased with the push for recognition in the 130th anniversary year of the unbeaten premiership.

Mr Marles hopes naming of the oval can happen to mark the anniversary and sees the start of the new AFL season as a fitting point.

"This is holy ground," he said.