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The ex-coaches' club

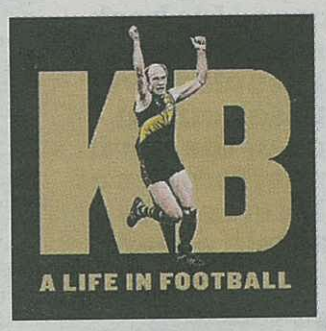
Tough Tiges

THE sacking of Dean Bailey was the elephant in the room with so many former coaches in attendance.

Kevin Bartlett couldn't help but draw a comparison with his own coaching record when referring to what hard taskmasters they had been at Richmond.

"I averaged seven wins a year, just a little bit better than Dean Bailey," he said.

"If I won seven games a year today, I'd get a three-year contract extension."



KB: A Life in Football is published by the Slattery Media Group and is on sale now. RRP $65. Visit footybookclub.com

THERE wasn't a shortage of former Richmond coaches at the launch of Tiger great **Kevin Bartlett's** book, *KB: A Life in Football*, at the MCG yesterday.

And they all had one thing in common. They had all been sacked, most of them spectacularly and controversially.

The roll call included **Tommy Hafey, Tony Jewell, Barry Richardson, Jeff Gieschen** and, of course, KB himself.

Former Richmond player **Neil Balme** got the bullet from Melbourne, as did his Tiger teammate **Kevin Sheedy** from Essendon, while other members of the sacked coaches' club were non-Tigers **Ron Barassi** and **Bob Skilton**.

Perhaps the unluckiest coach to experience the Punt Rd boot was Jewell, who coached Richmond to its last premiership in 1980, but got the sack the following season when the Tigers finished seventh.

He spent two years as coach of St Kilda where he also was sacked and returned to Richmond as coach in 1986-87 before getting the sack again.

Jewell said he'd spoken only yesterday to current Tiger mentor **Damien Hardwick** about the tough life of coaching.

"I told him that he'll finish up looking like me," Jewell said. "He said it was the loneliest job he'd ever done and after a loss you are just on your own."

Jewell said the public scrutiny of coaches was incredible. "I got sacked three times and my kids were at school all through that period," he said. "It's such a public thing and people forget what it does to your kids and family.

"I really feel sorry for **Dean Bailey**. It's like he is public enemy No.1."

Jewell said he handled the sackings by going straight to the pub and got on with life, rather than hiding away thinking he'd done something wrong.

"I'm lucky by nature that I don't hold grudges and I just got on with life," he said.

Jewell said a lot of the Richmond coaches didn't deserved to be sacked, but it was just the way the Tigers did things.

HAVE A NICE TRIP, HUNGRY?

Kevin Bartlett tripped over the banner 28 years ago this week on the MCG when he became the first to play 400 games. He did it again yesterday when the Richmond cheer squad made a special banner for his book launch. Picture: BRUCE MAGILTON

The one and only report

KEVIN Bartlett fell foul of the umpires only once in his 403-game career.

He got nabbed by field umpire **Neville Nash** when he king-hit Geelong's **Bruce Nankervis** at Kardinia Park.

When Cats coach **Bill Goggin** was told after the game that Nash had reported Bartlett for striking Nankervis, he quipped: "Well, Neville Nash will get four weeks for that."

Bartlett, who was playing his 374th game, said he had twice warned Nankervis, who was at yesterday's launch, not to hang on and when he did it again he king hit him. "He got about eight stitches," Bartlett said.

"We went to the tribunal and Bruce had this big gash above his eye and he said what do you think and I said 'I don't think we'll be calling you as a witness'. I just went in there and . . . said I went to swipe the ball but I missed and it was an accident."

Bartlett said tribunal chairman **Jack Gaffney** probably knew he was lying but after 374 games thought he had a few points on the board.

Crowe a 'great clubman'

THE rift with his old club was long and bitter, but Kevin Bartlett has finally put it to rest.

Yesterday he acknowledged that he was also to blame and his son, **Rhett** (right), even had a crack that "his coaching was not so good".

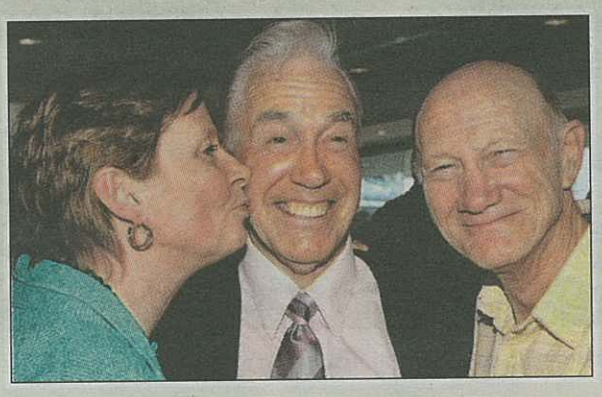
In the audience was Tiger stalwart **Neville Crowe** who was president when Bartlett was sacked as coach. He made a point of stating the old wounds had healed.

"I didn't speak to Neville for 16 years," Bartlett said. "I didn't like the way I was sacked."

But he was magnanimous in his praise of the ailing Crowe's work for Richmond.

"I've always spoken highly of the way he saved our club," Bartlett said.

"He's a great man."



Girlfriend goes by the Bill

KEVIN Bartlett thanked his wife Denise (left) for her great support and said he owed his premiership teammate Bill Barrot (centre) for helping him meet his long-standing partner.

"He didn't actually introduce us — he was taking her out," KB said.

The occasion was the 1967 preliminary final between Geelong and Carlton and Richmond coach Tom Hafey had insisted his players attend to study their Grand Final opponents.

When Bartlett took his seat, he found himself next to Denise, a Carlton fan whom Barrot had brought as his date.

"He was more professional than me — he was into the football and I was into Denise," Bartlett said. "He took all the stats and I took care of Denise. By the end of the game, I said, 'Would you like to go out with a superstar, sweetie pie,' and she agreed."

"I invited Billy to the wedding, but he couldn't come — he was in rehab," Bartlett joked.

Barrot celebrated his mate's book along with his old girlfriend.

Rhett talks up KB status

RHETT Bartlett, who wrote the book with his father, was too young to remember seeing him play.

He was three when KB played his final game.

Although Rhett didn't follow his father on to the football field, he certainly shares his quick wit.

"All I heard were all the stories he told about himself every day," Rhett joked.

He said he was proud to be involved with a book about his father's career, which next year celebrated its 50th anniversary.

"He started way back in the early 1960s, playing in the under-17s," he said.

"I'm very proud to be able to do this book just to show people how great my father was as a player and onwards through into the media, but coaching not so good."

Rhett said the book contained 85 previously unpublished photographs.

Legend lunches

THE friendship and loyalty from Kevin Bartlett to his old coach **Tom Hafey** is as strong as ever.

They used to meet for lunch every Monday, Wednesday and Friday to which Hafey quipped: "And I paid every time."

It was a custom that endured even the day Hafey was sacked by the Magpies.

Bartlett said he thought Hafey would cancel lunch, but there was no way he was going to change his routine.

"No, no they've got the roast on today," Hafey said.

They lunched in their regular Spring St cafe, with the footy world in turmoil.

Losing streak

KB says the perfect end to his career would have been a Grand Final win in 1982 under coach **Francis Bourke** with whom he played in five flags. He blamed the loss on the famous streaker. "**Helen D'Amico** came on the ground and stuffed it up," he said, "We know she was blonde or brunette, depending on which way you looked. But we were a young team and we lost focus. I was the only one old enough to handle it."