

# Recollections from the Past

**2002**

Season 2002 was a case of back to the drawing board for the Somerset Sharks. Over the previous two seasons, the Sharks had recruited heavily under senior coach Andrew Greenwood; however Greenwood left the club at the end of the 2001 season, and a number of quality players – including Adam Conkie, Shaun Conkie, David Jordaan, John Richardson, Marty Wells and Jarrod Cumming – left with him. Long-time club servant David Pease stepped into the breach to become senior coach and with few other options he started building a squad in which a handful of players with only two or three years experience playing senior soccer formed the core of his first eleven. While Richard Garnett, Simon Good, Justin Matthews, Wolfgang Stilger, Phil Pine, Stevie Wright and Sanjay Krishna gave Pease a number of experienced campaigners to call upon; he indicated very early in the year that he intended to put his faith in younger club members such as Casey Eaves, Ricki Eaves, Adam Hoare, Nathan Palmer, Andrew Keygan and Stevie Treloar more often than not.

As was expected by all but the most optimistic Sharks fans, there weren't too many results to write home about during the 2002 season. By the last game of the year, the Sharks had only recorded two wins and needed to draw against Ulverstone at Ulverstone to avoid finishing dead last. Before that game, Ulverstone themselves were sitting last on the ladder, so the Sharks went into the game feeling reasonably confident; however, with only minutes in the game remaining, it seemed the Sharks' confidence had been misplaced as they found themselves one goal down. A cheeky Ulverstone supporter even made a dash to his club's canteen and returned with a wooden spoon, presumably ready to present it to the Sharks as they left the field. As the clock ticked down towards a disappointing end of a tough season, the Sharks were awarded a free kick on the edge of their attacking 18 yard box, presenting perhaps one final chance to score and steal the point so desperately needed. Casey Eaves stood over the ball as players and supporters from both clubs held their respective breaths. With Andrew Keygan standing on one edge of the defensive wall, Casey's best option seemed to be to crack the ball straight at Andrew and hope that Andrew could move out of the way at the last second, thus obscuring the Ulverstone goal keepers vision. As it happened, it's a good thing Andrew moved out of the way quickly enough, because, if he hadn't, the ball probably would have taken his head off on its way towards smashing into the roof of the net. The Sharks celebrated deliriously, then held on during the final minutes to secure what at the time felt like one of the most satisfying draws in the Sharks' history. Also, as turned out, that Ulverstone supporter may have been better advised to have left the wooden spoon in the canteen. The Sharks took great delight in collecting the spoon from where the Ulverstone supporter dropped it after the game and returning with it to Shark Park where it became something of a talisman and a reminder for the players to fight and scrap to the very end of each game.

Maybe it is a matter of reading too much into small victories, but the trials and tribulations of 2002 – and 2003 for that matter – almost certainly played some small part in forging the young Sharks into the accomplished players they would go on to become. It's worth noting that of the younger players who played for the Sharks that season, Casey Eaves, Ricki Eaves, Adam Hoare, Andrew Keygan, Danny Eaves, Keegan Wells, Chris Considine and James Nettleton would all go on to play important roles during the the Sharks' first premiership winning season in 2006.

Adam Hoare