



Champions then, champions now

Key Learning Area
Studies of Society and Environment
History
English

Year levels
Years 3–4

Activity overview

This activity begins with students viewing one historical clip, *Fifty Years of Football*, and then viewing the two brief historical video clips of the game of AFL football showing Indigenous players Graham 'Polly' Farmer and Michael Long. These video clips are found in the Resources section of the AFL CD-ROM.

Students participate in a class discussion then they read Worksheet 1 with information on two Indigenous players: Graham 'Polly' Farmer and Michael Long, and offer their opinion on whether each player was a champion of the game based on a set of structured questions.

Worksheet 2 requires students to research two players of their choice. Students must also investigate a change to the rules, equipment or uniforms

Time required

Approximately 90 minutes

Materials

- 'Polly' Farmer and Michael Long information sheet
- *Worksheet 1: 'Polly' Farmer and Michael Long*
- *Worksheet 2: Champions then, champions now*
- AFL CD-ROM and suitable equipment to show video clip footage such as computers or data projector
- Access to the Internet or books for research activities

Activity steps

1. Encourage students to talk about their experiences about going to or watching a football match. Ask students who their heroes are. Watch the *Fifty Years of Football* video clip provided in the resources section of the AFL CD-ROM. The clip shows heroes of the game in action over the last 50 years. It includes an inspirational speech from coach E.J. Whitten.
2. Ask students to think about how football may have changed since it commenced in 1858. Also discuss what hasn't changed since the game started. For example, large crowds still attend the matches and players are still considered heroes. Background information is available in the history section of the AFL CD-ROM.
3. View the video clips *Polly Farmer* and *Michael Long* found in the Resources section of the AFL CD-ROM.

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Worksheet 2: Champions then, champions now

Name: _____

	Player 1 Played at least 30 years ago	Player 2 Must still be playing in the AFL
Player name		
Playing span		
Statistics For example – how many goals did they kick, how many grand finals did they win, any Brownlow medals, etc.		
Then and now Research a change in the game. It could be a rule, equipment or uniform change. In column one, write the situation when Player 1 played and in column two write the current situation.		
Key points		
Further research		

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4. Provide students with a copy of the 'Polly' Farmer and Michael Long information sheet. Read the information on Graham 'Polly' Farmer and Michael Long. Both of these players are Indigenous and were heroes of the game. Graham 'Polly' Farmer started his career more than 30 years before Michael Long.
5. Allow students sufficient time to complete *Worksheet 1: Champions then, champions now*.
6. This will require students to undertake further research using books or the Internet.

Distribute *Worksheet 2: Champions then, champions now* to students. Students undertake a research project using the Internet and books to investigate two players of their choice. One must be a current player and one must have played at least 30 years ago. Students add a research topic of their own in the space provided in Worksheet 2. One useful website to research players from at least 30 years ago is found through www.afl.com.au (under the Awards heading, follow the links to Hall of Fame then Legends or Players). The AFL club official websites will be useful sites to research current players.

7. The AFL website's history of Indigenous players is also a valuable resource. Go to http://www.afl.com.au/Portals/0/afl_docs/Influence_of_Aboriginal_Players.pdf
8. Teachers may choose to ask students to prepare a poster, summary or multimedia presentation on their chosen players to show the class.

Assessment ideas

- Willingness to participate in class discussion
- Ability to undertake comprehension and provide their own opinions on Worksheet 1.
- Ability to work independently to complete the research project required on Worksheet 2. Presentation skills may also be assessed if teachers required students to perform the multimedia presentation.

Optional extension

1. Through contacting the relevant state football body or possibly the local football club, invite an Indigenous football player to the class.

Details about these programs and resources can be found on the AFL website: <http://www.afl.com.au/Development/Schools/tabid/10252/Default.aspx>

2. Michael Long was instrumental in the creation of the AFL players' code of conduct on racism.



As a class, discuss:

- Why is it important to have a code of conduct on racism?
 - What should the key messages within the code be?
 - Do all sports have a similar code of conduct?
 - As a class, what is your code of conduct for behaviour?
3. The AFL held an Indigenous Round in 2007. This was held to honour the Indigenous AFL players and to show respect for their contribution to the AFL and to the Australian community.



(L-R) Patrick Ryder of Essendon, Michael Long and Andrew Krakouer of Richmond pose for a photo at the scar tree of a bark canoe in the grounds surrounding the MCG after a press conference for the AFL Indigenous Round at the MCG in 2007. The scar on this tree was created by the local Aboriginal tribe, the Wurundjeri. The people removed bark to make various items such as canoes, shields, and food and water containers leaving a scar on the Eucalyptus tree.

Imagine you are a sports magazine or newspaper reporter attending the Indigenous Round. Write a story that describes the skills of the Indigenous players displayed during the match.

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Polly Farmer and Michael Long

	Graham 'Polly' Farmer	Michael Long
Culture	Indigenous	Indigenous
Playing span	1953–1971	1989–2001
Statistics	East Perth 1953–61, Geelong 1962–67, West Perth 1968–71 356 career matches Two club Best and Fairest awards Played 31 times for Western Australia in the interstate arena VFL Premiership (1963)	190 career matches with Essendon 143 goals Essendon Team of the Century Norm Smith Medal (1993) AFL Premierships (1993, 2000)
Family	Childhood spent in an orphanage.	His parents were part of the Stolen Generation. Michael has six brothers and two sisters.
Status of Indigenous players in the league	Very few Indigenous players in the VFL (now the AFL).	Over ten percent of players involved in the AFL are Indigenous.
Skill development	Polly developed tough training programs for himself. Club training was more relaxed than it is today. Training drills and activities were not so complex.	Developed his speed and awareness while hunting with his family in his native Northern Territory. Training with Essendon was highly structured and intense.
Key points	Captain of Geelong from 1965 to 1967 His style of handball changed the game.	Played a key role in the introduction of the players' code of conduct on racism.

Stolen Generation

Between 1910 and 1970, some Indigenous children were taken away from their families and placed in institutions and church missions, or were adopted or fostered. This occurred all over Australia and these children became known as the Stolen Generation.



Worksheet 1: Polly Farmer and Michael Long

<p>Why do AFL fans think that Polly Farmer was a great player? What were his football achievements?</p>	<p>Why do AFL fans think that Michael Long was a great player? What were his football achievements?</p>
<p>What factors make a champion player? List and describe these qualities.</p>	<p>Many consider Polly Farmer and Michael Long to be champions of Australian football. Justify this opinion according to your researched information.</p>
<p>What challenges would Polly have faced given that he was one of very few Indigenous players in the game?</p>	<p>What challenges might Michael and other Indigenous players continue to face today?</p>

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