

Brent – Stirling Districts Football Club - speech

There were many facets to Leif's life but I've been asked by his family to talk about two of his passions – Stirling Districts Football Club and the Environment.

Helen told me that Leif's enthusiasm for football was forged as a child through late nights watching European matches on TV with Hugh when really he should have been in bed.

When he began playing, Leif played all his football at Stirling Districts.

His entire Junior football career was here and he made the big step from Junior to Senior level 5 years ago. He quickly became an established figure in the mens teams aka "the Aces" with his darting runs up the wing becoming his trademark. He was a very fit player and never appeared to tire.

His fitness and his popularity was evident at our Twilight 7 a side competitions where he seemed to be a member of a different team in every division and on the odd occasion where he wasn't playing he would happily fill in for anyone who asked.

Leif could also be seen on the touchline at Twilight coaching his brothers' Junior teams.

He was very nurturing towards the boys and when they completed Junior football he constantly encouraged them to join the Senior teams at Stirling Districts.

Leif was his own man and did things his way. On matchday, whilst all his teammates were still in bed, if a fixture was anywhere near the coast he would go for a surf before the game. At training with everyone in sports tops and shorts, Leif once turned up in sunglasses, a casual T shirt and a pair of jeans – thankfully he wasn't wearing thongs as he did conform to wearing a pair of football boots. When it came to his turn to cook the men's meals after training he would make everyone a vegetarian special – even the ---- committed carnivores in the group didn't mind because they respected Leif's beliefs and admired him for it. Although this faith might have been shaken slightly when he was caught wolfing down a roast chicken and chips after a few too many bebies one night.

Leif managed to combine his maverick streak with true empathy and mateship. He was that rare positive individual that no one had a bad thing to say about. Leif had a great sense of fun and enjoyed the banter with his teammates. When our new coach Gary arrived at the club Leif told him his name was pronounced "Lafe" and had Gary calling him that for few weeks "just because I thought it would be funny". Leif could laugh at himself too. He learned to laugh about watching his much loved yet somewhat rusty first car roll off on its own down the hill at Bradwood Park, knock over a safety rail and get to the changing rooms before he did. He also learned how to use the handbrake from then on.

He is also the only known player to managed to injure himself while on the bench. Just as he was about to brought on in a game, we had just scored a goal and he got so excited he managed to poke himself in the eye celebrating and he couldn't be brought on,,, typical Leify enthusiasm.

When I last spoke to him he was really excited about his bike trip but he enthused even more about his excitement for his teammates and the season ahead- he loved the atmosphere at the club, how brilliantly everyone was getting on as well as how excellently they were playing - he was so happy for them and was really looking forward to getting back from his trip and playing for Stirling Districts again. He took as much pleasure in the achievements and happiness of others as he did for himself.

To celebrate his life we at Stirling Districts are going to conduct a number of events to commemorate Leif's amazing nature, his great character, positive energy and love of this club. We have already had a minutes silence before our matches 3 weeks ago and players wore black armbands in his memory with his family in attendance.

In the long term we will acknowledge his tremendous involvement and influence:

- We will dedicate the first senior game of each season to Leif (including arm bands for players + 1min silence).
- We will rename the senior club man of the year award to The Leif Justham Award for the most positive contribution to the club for each season.
- We will display in the clubhouse a framed club shirt with Leif's name printed on it, signed by all the players
- We are going to establish a garden of native plants by the entrance of the clubhouse.
- We will support Leif's family in promoting the charities and causes that he believed in

Our thoughts go out to his wonderful family. They show amazing courage by continuing to spread Leif's message in speaking to the media even at this most challenging of times - you can see where Leif gets it from.

Leif was a passionate man of action. He didn't just pay lip service to issues, he tackled them head on. He was a committed environmentalist. He would bring in fruit he had grown to share at the club. He loved to plant trees and would make considerable donations to enable further reforestation. His passion culminated in his plan to spend 6 months cycling around the vast expanse of this country talking to anyone who would listen to convince them to change their bank and Superannuation to ethical companies that do not finance fossil fuels. He was aware of the dangers of this trip but he was dedicated to his cause.

How can we help carry on Leif's work and create a legacy?

-We can take the advice that Leif and his family have spread and contact our banks or Super fund encouraging them to change their practices or change to ones with ethical policies.

David Attenborough agrees with Leif, in his latest book stating: " Most of our large banks and pension funds have invested heavily in fossil fuels, the very things that are jeopardising the future we are saving for."

-Also we can donate to charities that Leif supported such as:

Australian Centre for Corporate Responsibility or Bush for Life

-Or we make a contribution towards a fund to enable his family to continue his environmental work and to create a lasting and tangible memorial to this beautiful young man.

Details for all of these causes are on the website: [leifjustham.com](http://leifjustham.com)

Leif also believed in stopping the use of 91 petrol – by simply using higher octane fuel such as 95 or 98 this not only reduces CO2 emissions but is kinder to your cars engine and helps you drive further.

In a broader sense, we can continue Leif's message by trying to live like this remarkable young man and in trying to emulate his values we can help his memory live on.

Be Passionate

Be Enthusiastic

Be Nurturing

Be Positive

Have courage in your own convictions

Take Action

Have Fun

Care

As I have stated before - Leif Justham cared - he cared for his family, he cared for his mates, he cared for Stirling Districts FC and he cared for the Planet.

His enthusiasm, positivity and empathy was an example to us all.

He lived a life less ordinary and was a truly inspirational character.

If we can all be even a bit more like him the World will be a significantly better place.

Let's get through this together ... for 'Leify' a great and proud Ace.