



## THE MARKET

Winter in Australia is all about Football. The great game of Aussie Rules was formed in 1858 and to this day is the largest football code in Australia. Player participation in 2007 exceeds 700,000 people across a number of cultural, gender and social communities. Since 1990, player participation has increased by 32 per cent and the game has never been in a stronger position. At AFL level attendance rates are up 17 per cent since 2000. The competition is now truly national.

The game is played in all States around the country and is developing in other markets such as New Zealand, Canada, USA, UK and South Africa.

As the game has developed and grown to the size it is today there has been one brand that is the stable influence in the game: "The Sherrin" football.

Sherrin is the official brand of the AFL, and sells over 500,000 balls into the Australian market each year. The remarkable penetration of the Sherrin brand in Australia has been made possible by years of dedication to craftsmanship and providing the game with the best possible product.

## ACHIEVEMENTS

The Sherrin brand has received numerous awards for its excellence of workmanship. As far back as 1881 and 1888, Tom Sherrin was awarded a Diploma of Merit for his fine craftsmanship.

Sherrin currently holds a dominant share of football sales and is the official ball of the AFL competition. It is the No.1 preferred football brand by most leagues.

Sherrin is the official ball sponsor for the AFL Auskick program and is committed to the growth of participation at grass roots level.

## HISTORY

Thomas William Sherrin grew up as one of nine children in a close family. Tom Sherrin didn't follow his father into carpentry but decided to become a saddler, repairing and manufacturing horse saddles, bridles and other leather equipment.



The saddlery where Tom worked was in Wellington Street, Collingwood. In the 1870s this area was dominated by tanneries and clothing and shoe manufacturers.

Tom was involved with a small club close to work called the Britannia Football Club. Australian Rules Football was a game derived from many fine sports including Irish Gaelic football, rugby and soccer. In its infancy, the game used rugby balls imported from England. The physical torture these balls endured in this tough, vibrant and robust new game created considerable wear.

They were regularly sent to Tom's saddlery to be repaired. Tom had to pull the ball apart in some cases to complete the repair work, and one day had a brainstorm which was to revolutionise the ball.

The rugby ball was elongated, and used to wear heavily on the ends. Tom created a new shape and developed a pattern that made the ball rounder on the points. The ball was still oval in shape, but it bounced more evenly and was easier to kick. His design was quickly accepted.

Tom scraped his pennies together and in 1879 built a small factory at 32 Wellington Street in Collingwood. T.W. Sherrin Pty Ltd was now established, and Tom employed a small band of tradesmen to produce enough footballs to keep up with the strong demand. The design of the new ball was so widely accepted that the National Football League of Australia eventually used the size and shape of the Sherrin football as the standard.

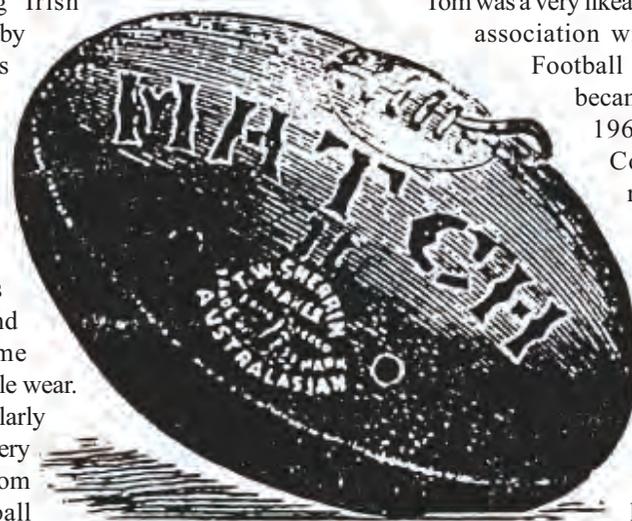
When Tom passed away in 1912, the business was left to Tom's nephew John Sydney Sherrin, who had served his apprenticeship with the company as a teenager. After his death in 1941, the War Department instructed young Tom (Syd's son) to carry on the family business, and discharged him from duties with the Air Force.

Tom was a very likeable man. He had a great association with the Collingwood Football Club and eventually became president between 1963 and 1974. The Collingwood FC recognized the magnificent services of the Sherrin family in 1976, when they named their new stand at Victoria Park, "The Sherrin Stand".

During the 1960s, Tom battled with his football business. He felt he had to double

the production in order to absorb running costs and still remain profitable. Without growth, T.W. Sherrin Pty.Ltd. would stagnate, and he could not see a bright future for the next generation of the family. He finally sold the business to Spalding in 1972.

Tom stayed on as manager of the Sherrin division of Spalding until his death in 1978. The Sherrin takeover by Spalding appeared on the front page of every major newspaper in Australia and made news bulletins in Europe and America.





In July 2003 Spalding were bought by Russell Corporation who to this day produce the most famous brand in football from their factory in Scoresby Victoria. To this day the balls are produced with the same craftsmanship and labour intensive process.

### THE PRODUCT

The strength of the Sherrin football originated from the quality leather football product. As we know it today Sherrin offers a vast range of balls that vary in size, colour and material to serve the needs of the great game.

Over the years, the Sherrin brand has appeared on products for other sports like boxing, cricket, netball, basketball and soccer but the family soon realised that the Aussie Rules products had the most potential, and specialised in football making. The Kangaroo Brand Sherrin, better known as the KB, is the most iconic product in football.

The process still begins with leather picked from only the choicest hides from Collingwood's Joshua Pitt tannery, pared into panels and rolled manually. Groups of four panels compatible in feel and stress pattern are backed with canvas, which itself can be fixed only with a longitudinal grain. A heated stencil marks out the Sherrin name before the ball is three-quarter-sewn inside out. It is the only really automated part of the manufacture. Pushed into shape from within, the ball is then hand stitched for the last quarter of its length.

Latex bladders, imported from India, are inserted with a conjurer's sleight of hand to leave the valve protruding. The ball is hand-laced with nylon – which replaced kangaroo hide about 30 years ago – before the second-last man on the production line pumps each to the optimum 69 kilopascals. The last man has the last word – accept or reject.

### RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Over the years the production of the leather Sherrin has seen only subtle changes. Hand stitching of some panels to machine stitching and leather laces to nylon laces have been the only developments to such a manual and specialised process over 100 years. The bladders have improved in strength and air retention capabilities and Sherrin only use the best bladders available in the market.

Custom logo leather balls have become increasingly popular in the corporate world and at all levels of league football. The opportunity to have your company or sponsor associated with the most famous brand in football is very attractive. Today Sherrin offers and produces more than 300 different corporate logo balls for game use.

In recent times a vast number of different panel materials has been introduced to develop recreation and junior/novelty balls to cater for all ages. Synthetics and PU material make colours and imagery possible and push the boundaries in look and style.

Sherrin ensures that its novelty range caters for all age groups and offers a series of AFL team, Neoprene, Synthetic and soft touch balls for the youth market. In 2005 Sherrin actually produced the very first "Pink" football which was used for charity purposes in conjunction with the Breast Cancer Council Australia. In 2007 Sherrin has a range of Pink footballs that sells to a vast variety of consumers.



### PROMOTION

Sherrin, through its official ball rights sponsorship of the AFL, has virtually ensured its place in all forms of sporting Print, TV and Press almost every week from February through September.

The AFL delivers a strong message in its promotion of the Sherrin football. During every game and every activity that involves football the Sherrin will be there.

At grass roots level the Sherrin will be the first invited to the game and you can read about its performance in the local record while honking the car horn.

### BRAND VALUES

Sherrin was founded in 1880 and since that time has had an unwavering attention to detailed craftsmanship; respect for the game; and support of football from elite to grass roots.

As custodians of this enduring brand name today, all staff involved in the brand are thoroughly grounded in these values to ensure that the Sherrin tradition continues and evolves.



### THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT SHERRIN

- In the 1960s Sherrin produced 600 to 800 leather balls a week. In 2007 Sherrin can produce that number a day, but still finds it hard to keep up with demand.
- It takes 22 minutes to produce a Sherrin football from start to finish.
- There are 23 steps in the production process to develop the perfect Sherrin football.
- Sherrin produced cricket balls that were used in the infamous bodyline series in the 1930s.
- Tom Sherrin served as Collingwood President from 1963 to 1974. In that time Collingwood played in three Grand Finals without success.
- All Sherrin Leather balls are still made in Australia.
- The Sherrin production team today collectively has over 200 years experience and one staff member has been making balls for 31 years.
- Custom logo balls make up a substantial number of the leather footballs produced.
- Today there are over 200 different styles of Sherrin footballs in the range.