

## INTERVIEW WITH LIONEL "JACKO" PROCTOR (FITZROY STARS) - 8/10/2020

**Connection Matters Radio (CMR):**

Late last week, on the 2nd of October, the Fitzroy Stars made the exciting announcement that the club would be welcoming back one of its former key players, Lionel "Jacko" Proctor. A veteran of three seasons with the Richmond Tigers, captain of the Stars from 2008 until 2015, five times the club's best and fairest, and the only Stars player to have won the league best and fairest award. And he did that twice. He returns to the fold, not as a player, but as senior coach. And he joins me today on Connection Matters Radio.

Lionel, welcome to the program.

**Lionel:** Thank you, Charles. Thanks for having me.

**CMR:** Lionel, it's exciting times. And first of all, congratulations on the appointment. And it actually does seem to be one that's pointing you now in the direction of a new potential career in coaching.

**Lionel:** Yeah, mate, it's exciting. Yeah, as I say, after I'd finished playing, I had a fair bit of time to think about things, and once, unfortunately, Dean Rioli had to step aside due to work commitments. I definitely thought about it. And after speaking to, obviously, people that you trust and that you love, speaking to the wife and my four boys, so definitely had to speak to them as well, and the family, I guess it was probably something inside of me that was pushing me to take it on and I guess give back to the club and help out where I can.

**CMR:** And what does it mean to you personally to return to this club where

you've had so much success and so much recognition over those years?

**Lionel:** Yeah, it's awesome. Obviously, it's been a massive part of my life. Probably started here as a junior and my dad played at the Stars in 1977 and '78. And I played a year in the under 11s, back in the juniors, which seems like a lifetime ago now. Yeah. Yeah, and then obviously, being involved with the club since 2008, when we came back into the league. Been there ever since. Retired for a year and then come back. So, yeah, it's exciting. It's a huge family club and community club, which we all enjoy. It's like catching up at a carnival every weekend.

**CMR:** It is an interesting point that you bring up there. You've mentioned community, you've mentioned family. Your father played in what, '77, '78, which was before you were even born.

**Lionel:** Yep.

**CMR:** How important is it to the community that the Fitzroy Stars continue the way it has been over the past years to bring together community in the ways it always has?

**Lionel:** Super important, I think. It's always been a big family club and a big community club. It's like a gathering place every weekend. As I mentioned about the carnivals, it's great to play in the carnivals where you get to catch up with everyone over the weekend and that's sort of once a year, but this happens every week during the season.

**CMR:** So, half social, half football?

Yeah. I think it is. Yeah. People mightn't get to see each other during the week. So, it's a great chance to catch up on the weekend at the footy, or the netball on a Friday night. So, it's a good meeting place to keep everyone connected, and enjoying themselves, enjoying each other's company.

**CMR:** Now, Lionel already, you've been on social media, announcing your intent to contact all the current players, the coaches, as well as potential recruits and support staff. And at the same time, you've recognised in those posts, the challenges that are faced by the team through coronavirus. The pre-season training normally starts, when's that? Pre November or early November?

**Lionel:** It's usually early November.

**CMR:** So, what are some of the challenges that you and your fellow coaches and the players are going to be facing right off the bat? And even though it's early days, I recognise that, have you thought about any strategies that can help to achieve that important level of pre-season fitness?

**Lionel:** Yeah, it's quite a difficult one. Obviously, we've never been in this situation. But I guess it's just getting organised now. I've been speaking to a few players lately on the phone and through social media. Quite a few fella are already keeping active as it is, going for runs and going to the oval for a kick and stuff. Obviously, we can't train together in big groups at the moment so we're hoping in the next few weeks it's going to lead up to groups of 10 where guys might be able to catch up a couple of times a week or on the weekend and

get into groups of around 10 and go through something like a running program.

I have got a running program which I'm going to send out to all the fellas. It's a three day a week program and goes for about six weeks. So, we've got to start somewhere. So, I'll send the program out and then some fellas will be able to get out there and get active again and start getting ready for when we can get back to the footy club and all get-together and train properly.

**CMR:** You mentioned in the post also that you were looking to get in contact with potential players or potential recruits. What should individuals who may have thought about the idea of joining the Stars, what do they need to be able to do? Do they need to have specific skills already? What level would you like to see people coming in at?

**Lionel:** Oh, at the moment, we need some big players. We've never been a tall side. So, we're definitely looking at some key position players. But yeah, I guess there's no limit on it, anyone's welcome to come down and try out. We've always been a club that anyone's welcome regardless of where you've come from and your ability as well. So, we encourage everyone to come in and try it and just make it enjoyable for everyone.

**CMR:** Coronavirus aside, what are some of the challenges that you see going forward, building up the numbers of the teams, the coaching staff, and the support staff? What are the key challenges you think facing the club into 2021?

**Lionel:** When it comes down to the individual, really, you've really got to want to improve your life and live a healthy lifestyle and that as well. You've got to get that work-life balance right.

**CMR:** Well, that's from an individual perspective. But what about from the club perspective? What are your key challenges that you see in your march

towards achieving that goal that you stated before, which is playing consistent finals football?

**Lionel:** That's consistently rocking up to training and all just getting together and the one goal in mind. As I said, it's always been a family club and we need to get that real enjoyment back. I think it's been missing over the last couple of years. So, I really want to get that enjoyment back. You need to enjoy training and obviously trying to improve your footy. So, it's really about enjoyment. We don't really want to rock up and run around in circles. No one really enjoys that. So, it's about doing other things to make everyone enjoy their footy. Obviously, when you're enjoying your footy, you're playing your best. So, we're going to make it fun. Obviously, we've got game plans and structures to work on but let's have fun doing it.

**CMR:** So, do you see yourself also in the position of being coach and also working individually with your players to help them achieve that commitment? They have to have it obviously within themselves, you can't give that to them fully. But also that balance between life, work, and football.

**Lionel:** Yeah, definitely. That's one thing I'll definitely be doing. Every player that comes down, we want to be able to have that good relationship. That really strong communication about where they want to get to with their football, and life as well. So, yeah, it's not just all footy, it's definitely about how you're living your life and doing the right things outside the footy club as well.

**CMR:** Our Stars, aren't the only club obviously to be facing the challenges that we're facing going forward into the new season, which will hopefully happen.

**Lionel:** Yep.

**CMR:** What are some of the strengths that you see in the Stars that can be carried forward to gain that success in the next

season and successive season?

**Lionel:** Yeah, it's going to be difficult and I know all clubs are in the same spot, as we said. The family pull, to come and play with your brothers every weekend, that's a big thing. And I think obviously, the players that have been there for a long time really enjoy their time at the Stars. And when we talk to friends and they talk to friends about what it actually means to put on a Stars jumper and the past and what the footy club's about, just knowing that players can come down and really be embraced regardless of where they're from and their ability, and really enjoy their time running out, yeah, with a group of brothers every weekend.

**CMR:** Lionel, before I let you go, do you have a last call to action to mob out there who may be listening to this broadcast right now?

**Lionel:** Yeah. I guess I just want to say hello to everyone and that I'm so excited to be starting off my coaching career at the Stars. But yeah, as I said, anyone out there that's willing to come down and have a run, get fit, it's all about getting fit and staying healthy. Yeah, you're more than welcome, regardless of where you're and your ability, we're going to welcome you with open arms and hopefully, we can see you down there once we can get together for pre-season.

**CMR:** Lionel Proctor, newly appointed senior coach for the Fitzroy Stars, thanks for coming on to Connection Matters Radio and we'll catch up with you again once the pre-season really gets underway.

**Lionel:** No worries, Charles. Thanks a lot.

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