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This volume addresses the formation of the Victorian Football Association and the maturation of the game. By the late 1870s there were so many clubs and disputes that it was agreed to form the Victorian Football Association (VFA). The formation clubs were senior and country clubs, and included Albert Park, Ballarat, Barwon, Beechworth, Carlton, Gasfomaine, Geelong, Hotham, Ingleswood, Melbourne, Rochester and St. Kilda. Other clubs such as Essendon, South Melbourne and East Melbourne joined over the following years.

Inter-Colonial contests began in 1879 when Victoria played South Australia. In 1878 Geelong rose as a dominant football power in Victoria and maintained their pre-eminence for a decade. This club revolutionised the style of the game and reached new levels of physical fitness and football strategy and tactics.

By the 1880s, the game was characterised by long kicking, and fast and open football. It was due to this that football became even more popular with the general public, and by the end of the decade big games were attracting up to 30,000 spectators. This made clubs such as South Melbourne, Geelong, Carlton and Essendon extremely powerful.

Many football enthusiasts and historians view the 1880s as the golden era in the early days of football. At this time, football helped make 'marvellous Melbourne' the sporting capital of Australia.

Origins of Australian Football: Victoria's Early History

Mark Pennings  
**Origins of Australian Football:  
 Victoria's Early History**

Volume 2:

**A GOLDEN ERA BEGINS:  
 FOOTBALL IN 'MARVELLOUS MELBOURNE',  
 1877 to 1885**



Mark Pennings is a senior lecturer in Visual Arts in the Media, Entertainment and Creative Arts School at Queensland University of Technology. He worked with the AFL as a curatorial consultant for the 1996 centenary exhibition and has written numerous articles and exhibition catalogues about nineteenth century football and other sports. He is currently working on the project *Rewriting Australian Football History* with Robert Pascoe.



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