

LINKED BY 'SHEAR' TALENT

Former AFL champions Jim and Phil Krakouer and Nicky Winmar have strong family links to the wool industry.

When Jim and Phil Krakouer first arrived at North Melbourne in 1982, they took the football world by storm.

They had the uncanny ability of knowing where the other was on the field, so much so a football journalist at the time commented: "It was like someone bowling backwards in cricket. It was totally without precedent."

Coming from Mt Barker in Western Australia, the Krakouers, Noongars from the south-west, learned how to play football using meagre means. On the reserve, they played mini scratch matches, using shirts for goalposts. Moving into a house in town, the boys used the passage way and a rolled up pair of socks to hone their kicking precision.

One of the best descriptions of their boyhood training practices was in *Brotherboys* (Allen and Unwin) and explained by a relative when Eric Krakouer, their dad, was having his tea after a hard day shearing: "They'd be handballing over the table and see how close they could get to Dad's nose and Dad would take no notice because he knew they were training and perfecting their handball."

For many Noongar people, playing football and working in shearing teams went hand in woolly glove. Former St Kilda champion Nicky Winmar remembers both fondly.

"I remember being a young kid growing up playing footy with the cousins in Pingelly and enjoying country life," Winmar said.

"I had uncles that were great footballers. My Dad was a shearer and worked on the farms, but he wanted something else for me. He trained me and I just went out there and worked hard in my football."

MEN OF THE LAND: Eric Krakouer (pictured below) was a shearer, as was the father of ex-St Kilda great Nicky Winmar.



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A RELATIVE ON THE KRAKOUER BROTHERS PRACTISING HANDBALL

Winmar scaled the heights of football success, in 1997 becoming the first Indigenous Australian to play 200 AFL games.

Winmar's greater legacy is the indelible image of him raising his jumper and pointing to his skin in the round four game against Collingwood in 1993. This act is still considered as forever having changed race relations in Australia for the better.

Jim Krakouer and Winmar are members of the AFL's Indigenous team of the Century and their lives and the other members are documented in *Legends: The AFL Indigenous Team of the Century* (ASP).

Like many other Aboriginals, they have an enduring legacy in the Australian wool and pastoral industry and are proud to be part of the Fibre of Football campaign. **B**



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