



# The Carbine Club of NSW

## Keith Free OAM

**Born:** 1929

**Carbine Club Member since:** 1977

Keith was a keen and active sportsman playing rugby league, rugby union, cricket and tennis. Keith attended the selective high school Sydney Technical High School from 1943 to 1947. He represented the school in many different ways: Rugby Union 1st grade 1945/6/7, Cricket 1st grade 1945/6/7, Athletics running 880 yards, Debating Hume Barbour as the whip 1947.

Another talent Keith possessed was his vocalist ability. In 1946, Keith was selected to sing solo when the schools 1000 voice choir sang at the Sydney Town Hall.

There are three major awards voted on at the school. Pupil votes count 50%, teachers votes count 50%. The awards are: 1. The Wykeham prize at the end of 3rd year 1945. 2. School Captain elected at the end of 4th year (1946) to take over in 5th year (1947). 3. Turner prize elected at the end of 5th year 1947. Keith won all three.

Keith always had an interest in racing and in 1952 at the age of 23, he visited the Office of NSW Bookmakers to enquire how he could become a licensed bookmaker. Staff at the NSW Bookmakers quizzed Keith on his financial situation, and he proudly replied, I have 500 pounds. They asked Keith, do you have any property or other assets? No, he replied! They advised Keith he would need assets of at least 2,000 pounds to gain membership. Keith said, I'll be back.

True to his word, he returned and was granted membership and eventually became Chairman of the NSW Bookmakers in 1968. To commence his bookmaking career, he visited the Grey Hound Racing Control Board, deposited 250 Pounds and was granted a bookmaker's licence.

His first official venture was the regular Wyong greyhounds which raced every Saturday afternoon. In 1974, he founded the NSW Bookmakers Superannuation Fund and was the sole investments person from 1976 to 1999.

Keith started playing bowls in 1962 at the National Coursing Bowling Club at Moxham Road Punchbowl and started the funding of the National Foundation of Touring Bowlers by organising the sale of debentures. Keith's bowling successes commenced in 1963 winning the minor singles in his first year then runner-up in the major singles the following year. He also won the pairs and fours before transferring to Greenlees Park in 1965.

Keith was awarded the Order of Australia medal for his services to the racing industry in particular and to community services generally.

In 2006, Keith was nominated and invested with the distinctive honour of Patron of the Briar's Men's Bowling Club. In recognition of Keith's achievements and commitment to the Bowling Club, he was awarded Life Membership and the number 2 green being named the "Keith Free OAM Green" in his honour.