

Cathie Miller



F C L E O P O L D
S O C C E R M U M S

“IN THE SPOTLIGHT...”

“I am glad to be back at soccer mums! I just haven’t been able to commit to any for a while! Definitely going to keep working back at it. Still running, just not as much. Setting some goals with that and with Karate to keep me motivated now that I don’t have ‘the dress’ to keep me in line!” Cathie Miller

Our Soccer Mums Manager, Jen Willmott, caught up with Cathie to learn more about her journey since joining FC Leopold Soccer Mums in Term 4, 2018.

Jen: Thank you for taking the time to submit your story to Soccer Mums Cathie, I really enjoyed reading your journey since joining Soccer Mums. Your journey is not just relatable but is also inspirational for other women.

Let’s begin at the start, where did you hear about Soccer Mums and what made you leave the sidelines behind?

Cathie: I heard about soccer mums from FC Leopold – I think they advertised it on their Facebook page and there was also some discussions around some of the kid’s games leading up to it. At the time I was trying to lose weight after reaching my heaviest weight in my whole life, and desperately wanted to do something to be healthy. I was doing karate and swimming but it wasn’t enough. The Soccer Mums program advertised that it was for all fitness levels, that there was no experience necessary and it was non-judgemental. Perfect! I also at the time needed something that pushed me to engage with people and the community as I was going through a difficult time. I also suddenly found myself purchasing a wedding dress that was 2 sizes too small and needed to fit into it!

When I mentioned to my son that I was thinking of doing it, he was very excited and said he would train me! My wife was also very supportive and since the price was also very affordable I thought, ok, I’ll give it a go!

Jen: What was the program like? What did you learn about both Soccer and yourself?

Cathie: Most of all, it was fun! I think as a group we quickly became quite friendly and enjoyed each other’s company. I remember the first session, I turned up, very anxious, and a little bit late. I rushed down and grabbed a ball and we started jogging around. Now, I didn’t normally jog or run, and I was very quickly puffed. I felt very self-conscious about this and tried to subtly have a puff on my Ventolin a few times (probably more unfit than asthmatic!) I remember thinking, oh my god, how am I going to get through this, I can’t do this, how embarrassing. But then, at some stage, something shifted, and I was having so much fun. I think my competitive nature kicked in a little, and there was so much laughter. Suddenly the session was over, and we were going for coffee at Ollies. I think it had a lot to do with Cath (Soccer Mums Venue Deliverer) and you (Jen) being so energetic and supportive. I left feeling so accomplished, and it made me realise something... It’s ok to be puffed! You can be puffed and keep on puffing! Rather than stopping because you’re out of breath and you’re worried what other people might think. This was a big turning point for me. I also discovered that I really like soccer, and if I had the time then I would love to play on a team and play actual games.

Cathie Miller

F C L E O P O L D
S O C C E R M U M S



Jen: You are right, it is ok to be puffed and keep going" A lot of women struggle with this concept and worry about judgement. To hear your journey through that realisation and then creating your own journey to a more active lifestyle will help other women take that first step - especially for those women with similar weight loss goals. It is important to pace yourself and set smaller goals than focusing on the bigger target.

Now, this might be a more selfish question for me - but please tell me more about your wedding and how you felt marrying your partner?

Cathie: My wedding day - the most amazing day of my life. Marrying the woman that I love, committing to her and her (our) children was surreal. Something that I thought would never happen (given that it was illegal until recently). We have been together for 8 years already, being able to get married, finally, was almost overwhelming. The day went so fast, although it was so long! We got married at Jack rabbit, and everything was perfect - aside from the freezing cold wind! The food was amazing, the view is to die for, and everyone had a wonderful time - many said it was one of the most beautiful and romantic weddings they had been to. I hear that almost everyone was crying! (I was too wrapped up in Carrie to notice!) There was one moment when we were sitting down to our meal I said to Carrie, "Just stop for a minute, and look. This is all for us, everyone here is here for us. It's so beautiful, it's magical" The next morning, it really felt like it was a dream.

Jen: Oh my, that sounds like an amazing day!! I was tearing up! To finally be able to marry your life partner surrounded by those you love and feeling more comfortable is just perfect to hear.

You spoke quite passionately about your weight loss journey for your wedding, can you go into a bit more detail about how Soccer Mums helped you change your perspective on exercise and living a healthier lifestyle?

Cathie: Well, as I said above, the discovery about 'it's ok to be puffed and keep going' was a key turning point. It may sound silly, but I think in the past, once I would start to get a bit out of breath in any exercise, I would slow down or stop. That's not very helpful if you are really wanting to lose weight! I had already realised through Karate that I was capable of more than I thought I was - that I have a 'strong spirit' and can keep on going, but soccer mum's helped me to realise that again. After the first session of soccer mums I had lost I think around 5 kgs in the 6 weeks. I quickly enrolled into the second program. In the mean time, I could feel the time ticking for my dress, and I really didn't want to have to alter it! I also was in a very motivated state and I decided to start the 'couch to 5 kms' running app - since now I wasn't afraid of getting puffed. And, I did it! It was an 8 week program, and I was running 3 days a week with slowly increasing intervals of running, plus doing the Soccer Mums. When I first ran that 5kms I felt on top of the world. Dead! But so alive at the same time! The girls in the Soccer Mums group were so supportive all the way through, and actually when I came back for the second program, they had said looking at the photo from the first session to the last session they noticed that I had lost weight, which is always good to hear!

Over a 12 month period I lost 24kgs, And I fit into that wedding dress without taking out a single seam!

Jen: Congratulations, that is an amazing achievement! Not only did Soccer Mums help you work towards your weight loss goals, you also said that it helped you in the backyard with your son, this is something that is very relatable for a lot of mums out there, how did Soccer Mums impact your time in the yard and your relationship with your son?

Cathie: My son was very excited and was pretty keen to train me! We started to spend more time together in the back yard, which helps build up his skills too. He enjoys playing with me as I don't mind being a bit rough and maybe a little competitive! It also meant that I could give him a few little tips with some foot work. Well, I tried to, but he knew most of them already! It definitely brought us closer having a mutual interest.

Cathie Miller

F C L E O P O L D
S O C C E R M U M S



Jen: You mentioned that you were going through a difficult time when you decided to join Soccer mums, can you tell me a little bit about that?

Cathie: I had been struggling with my mental health for a little while after experiencing some awful events at work. I was struggling with symptoms of anxiety and depression, and some trauma symptoms. I had to take some time off work and then was building up my hours, working a few hours, a couple of days per week. Soccer mums gave me something else to focus on and gave me something else to do during the week. It got me out of the house and engaging with people. With some of the issues I was struggling with, having a conversation with someone at times was challenging. It may not have seemed like it, but there were times it felt like I was thinking through a fog, everything seemed so slowed down it was hard to think and therefore talk. There were times my anxiety would make me second guess every little thing I said or did. This was why it was so beneficial to put myself out there to help me in my recovery. So I am thankful for the 'non-judgemental' atmosphere of soccer mums. Plus - let's not forget one of the benefits of exercise is often an improved mood, thanks to the endorphins that it releases. Community engagement and connectedness also helps with promoting good mental health.

Jen: You truly are a fabulous, courageous and inspirational woman! I really appreciate you taking the time to empower other women with your journey and share what really has been some amazing achievements in 12 months Cathie, as an ending - what would you say to anyone considering signing up to Soccer Mums?

Cathie: Just Do It! It really is so much fun and has so many potential benefits! Your body and your mind will thank you - and so will your kids.

Are you ready to share your Soccer Mums Journey?

**Submit your story to
soccermums@footballvictoria.com.au
today!**

We would love to hear from you!

Soccer Mums is proudly presented in Geelong by: