

SA fails despite Kernahan

Victoria	3.3	9.5	13.7	16.12	108
South Australia	3.2	7.4	12.5	16.8	104

By GEOFF KINGSTON

But then 15 minutes after the start, SA began to play football. Victoria had kicked 3.1 before SA scored - a freakish snap by Stephen Kernahan. It was the start of an adventurous journey that almost ended in one of the most remarkable victories in SA football history.

From that point mid-way through the first term the game was fraught with danger... but there was also honor - for both sides. SA kicked back to trail by only one point at the end of the first quarter and then Kernahan put SA in front in the opening two minutes of the second.

Even at that early stage the Victorians conceded he was a threat to their success and were two-timing him as the ball lobbed near the SA goalsquare.

While Kernahan and Neville Roberts alongside him in the pocket were creating problems for the Victorian defence Peter Daicos and Jim Buckley were causing a degree of confusion at the other end of the ground.

Kerley was forced to switch Lee Robson onto Daicos but he continued to hurt SA until Robin White took him late in the quarter.

From that point Daicos's influence was diluted by the gritty performance by White.

But it was the relentless pressure; the running and numbers build-up that was worrying SA.

And with Salmon standing and marking like some Colossus in the goalsquare SA looked a little uncomfortable; even in danger of being pushed aside.

Down to 20 players with the loss of Tony Giles (cruciate ligament) at

half-time SA was staring down the barrel at another big defeat.

But it was then that the brutish courage of Garry McIntosh, who had set a fine example all night, began to pay off.

He, and his team-mates literally bulldozed their way back into the game.

And it was kernahan at the goalsquare who jumped up to grab the game by the throat.

His exciting skills have rarely been so evident and the panic he caused in the Victorian defence opened up opportunities for team-mates repeatedly.

Kernahan, who won the Fos Williams medal as SA's best player, finished with 10 goals to stamp his class on the game and as SA and Victoria stood toe-to-toe in the last term it was he, who the hugely parochial SA crowd was screaming for to win it for them.

In that dramatic last quarter the lead changed four times before Victoria edged clear with a succession of five desperate points in the last 12 minutes.

It was Victoria's runners once again that squeezed clear at the finish. Wayne Johnston continued to dominate with his clever left foot skills, Hary Wilson, swung back into the game won some important possessions and Jim Buckley also did the things that counted when it was needed.

GOALKICKERS - Victoria: Salmon 5.2, Daicos 3.1, Buckley 2.0, Johnston 1.2, Evans, Moore 1.1, Wilson, Carroll, Hawkins 1.0, Watson 0.2, Healy, Tuck 0.1, rushed 0.1. SA: Kernahan 10.1, Roberts 4.2, Motley 1.1, Schneebichler 1.0, Giles, Craig 0.1, rushed 0.2.

BEST - Victoria: Johnston, Buckley, Watson, Madden, Kennedy, Salmon. SA: Kernahan, McIntosh, Bradley, Platten, Noley, White.

Umpires - L. Argent, G. James.

Victoria avenged its very public humiliation of 1983 with an exciting and dramatic four-point victory over SA at Football Park last night.

It came to Adelaide yesterday threatening revenge for its stunning 56-point loss to SA last season.

Many came believing it was their duty, and that they would pluck their revenge like some luscious fruit.

Instead they had to withstand a SA performance that was built on inspirations of courage.

SA's narrow defeat, while it might be unpalatable to those whose avarice for reward is almost vulgar, was a reward to decorate a very brave side. Watched by a capacity crowd of 52,719, SA was trying for a part of history. The last time it put together back-to-back victories against Victoria was in 1924-25.

SA coach Neil Kerley said afterwards... "It was one of the best interstate games. I thought we had it won but we just didn't do the right work or pick up players late in the last quarter.

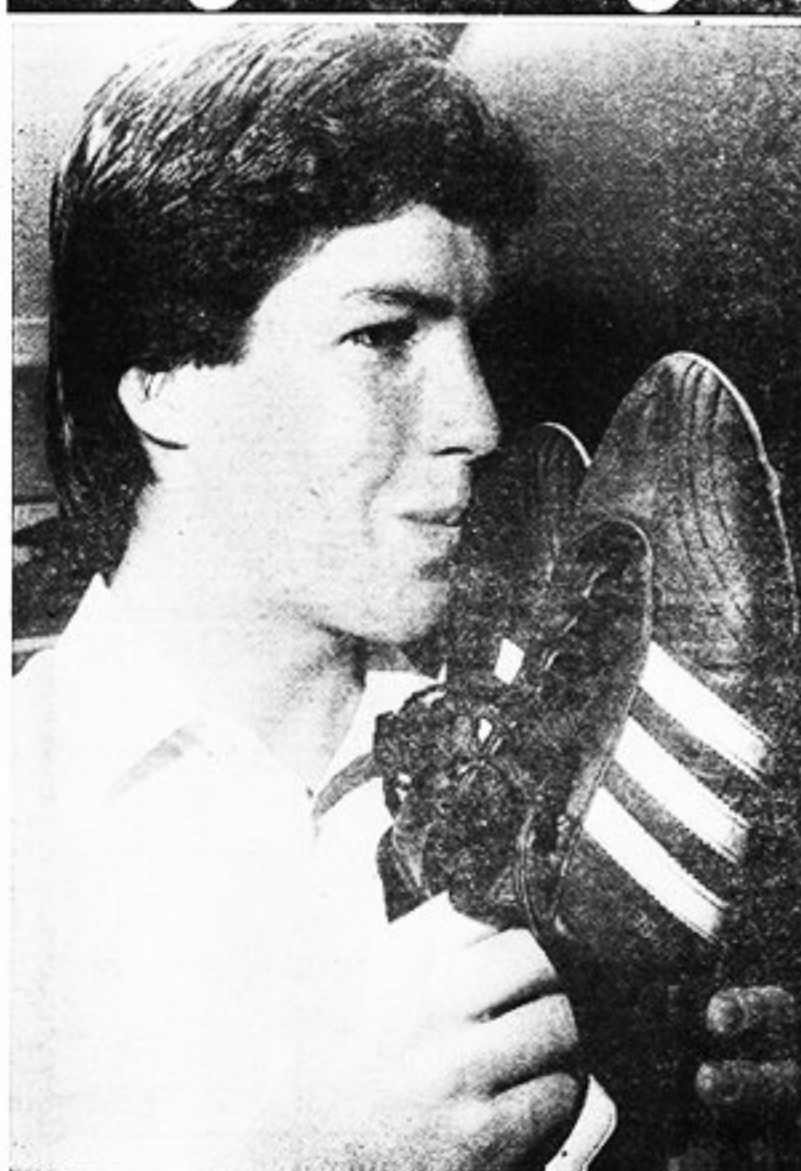
"This cost us the match. "Tiredness brings a lack of discipline.

"I have been associated with a lot of SA sides. I've been disappointed with some and proud of a couple. I was very proud of this one," said Kerley.

SA looked in trouble early as the Victorians built up wave after wave of attacks that focused on giant, 203 cm full forward Paul Salmon.

The Victorian runners Jim Buckley, Peter Daicos, Gary Wilson, Wayne Johnston and Michael Tuck in the centre provided ominous signs as their one-grab skills and pace contrasted with the strangely tentative beginning by SA.

Kernahan, the 10-goal King



Stephen Kernahan... boots on the right foot

But he nearly missed game

Stephen Kernahan has a traffic cop to thank for putting him on the right foot at Football Park last night.



The young goal-kicking sensation was one of thousands trapped in a traffic jam before the historic, floodlit showdown against Victoria.

Kernahan was blocked helplessly on Brebner Drive as the minutes ticked away and the stadium packed.

"I had to show the traffic policeman my blazer to get through," the boy with the golden boot said today.

It was a vital manoeuvre by Kernahan, who went on to lift a crowd of 52,719 into a frenzy with 10 brilliant goals against the awesome Victorians.

SA failed by just four points to achieve its second conquest in successive seasons against the Big V, but Kernahan was easily the most outstanding player.

It was an effort which singled him out as the hottest piece of football property in Australia.

But the Glenelg and State star, who almost carried us over the moon last night, had his feet firmly on the ground today.

"Yes," he said, "It was great being involved in a side which got so close

to the Victorians and kicking 10 goals.

"But we must remember we did not win.

"I'm now looking forward to playing against WA here next month, but until then I'm just concentrating on doing my best for Glenelg."

Kernahan, nursing a corked left thigh as he ploughed through breakfast today, still had the noise of the huge crowd ringing in his ears.

"It was unbelievable," he said. "I've played in grand finals before, but last night we had about 50,000 people, all on our side."

Kernahan has been relentlessly hunted by Victorian club Carlton, and there is no doubt his performance last night will reinforce efforts to lure him across the border next year.

But the modest hero still insists "... I'll make my decision at the end of the season. My only aim is to help Glenelg win the premiership."

Kerley attacks VFL

SA coach Neil Kerley attacked the Victorian Football League immediately after the interstate match at Football Park last night.

When asked whether the high standard of the game and the closeness of the scores (following SA's win over Victoria last year) finally would prompt the VFL to invite SA to play in Melbourne for the first time since 1971, Kerley said: "The Victorians don't want us there. All they think about is their own game.

"They are only concerned about football in Victoria.

"Football will never progress interstate-wise while they have that attitude.

"I hope tonight's game will go a step towards encouraging interstate football back into Victoria.

"This was one of the best interstate games you would ever see.

By ALAN SHIELL

"I was pleased it went to the line, but I was bloody disappointed we didn't win.

"Our players did everything humanly possible to win it for SA. I would have liked them to have won it for themselves and for the effort they put in."

Kerley said he was "very happy" with the umpiring of Victorian Glenn James, but he would not comment on the display of SA's Laurie Argent.

"James's exhibition was one of the best I've seen from a Victorian for a long time," Kerley said.

Victorian coach Allan Jeans said: "SA put so much pressure on us, but they just got too tired in the end.

"We were very fortunate to win.

"Our fellows accepted the challenge and didn't surrender. They were under enormous pressure from SA and they didn't have the crowd pushing them."



SA forward Neville 'Rocky' Roberts marks in front of Victoria's Dr Ackroyd during last night's action. Picture by staff photographer Br Charlton.