

Sensational stuff in 10-point glory

By
GEOFF KINGSTON

SA avenged its 57-point humiliation last year with a sensational 10-point victory over Victoria at Football Park last night.

As revenge it was wild and violent justice and a tribute to the SA players' remarkable persistence under extreme pressure.

Football games are like fingerprints — no two are alike. And this State game was certainly like no other.

Fear, pride, self respect... they were all the cornerstones of last night's triumph.

There were some brave acts and some not so brave acts during the hectic, and at times spiteful, match as players from both sides tried to frighten each other.

SA had also to overcome a bewildering and generous (to Victoria) display by Victorian umpire John Russo.

He so incensed the 43,143 that for most of the match he was the subject of a barrage of booing.

He further antagonised the angry stadium when he reported SA back-pocket player Scott Salisbury for striking Victoria's Geoff Raines during the last quarter. At a hearing late last night the charge against Salisbury was postponed until tomorrow night.

SA coach Graham Cornes said afterwards "It was one of those great games of football. Right from the word go we knew we were under pressure but we were prepared to give a bit back and we set the pattern in the first half with some very good running, positive footy."

"We turned it on with sheer guts and determination," Cornes said.

Asked about umpire Russo's display, he merely shook his head.

Victorian coach Kevin Sheedy, who masterminded Victoria's 57-point win last year said: "SA was terrific. It earned its win."

"Its sharpness was better than ours. SA played a great brand of football."

Asked about umpire Russo, Sheedy said: "I didn't take much notice."

The game was a bed of ruses early as Cornes and Sheedy toyed with their team placings in a bid to confuse and bemuse.

Sheedy even spirited in — unbeknown even to the Victorian players — his Essendon tagger Shane Heard to do a number on John Platten.

SA refused to be intimidated as the Victorians paraded their arrogance and none were more arrogant than Paul Salmon, Kevin Walsh and Roger Merrett — Victoria's three huge ruckmen who towered over the indomitable Mick Redden.

He refused to succumb and with Danny Hughes mounted an early challenge.

But it was the SA runners and playmakers who began to put a smile on the faces of the SA fans.



HOW SWEET IT IS... Jubilant SA players celebrating in the changeroom after their brilliant 10-point victory over Victoria at Football Park last night.

Pictures: STUART HANNAGAN

SA	3.2	8.7	16.10	18.17	(125)
VIC	4.4	8.9	13.9	17.13	(115)

BEST — SA: Bradley, Kernehan, Aish, McDermott, Naley, Platten. **Victoria:** Salmon, Clark, Poole, Brereton, Walsh, Pert.

GOALKICKERS — SA: S Kernahan, G Dietrich 4, J Platten, M Naley 2, C McDermott, G Fielke, C Williams, M Aish, T McGuinness, K Thomas. **Victoria:** P Salmon 4, D Brereton, S Clark, T Poole 3, M Harvey 2, D Weightman, G Williams.

Umpires: R Kinnear (SA), J Russo (Vic)

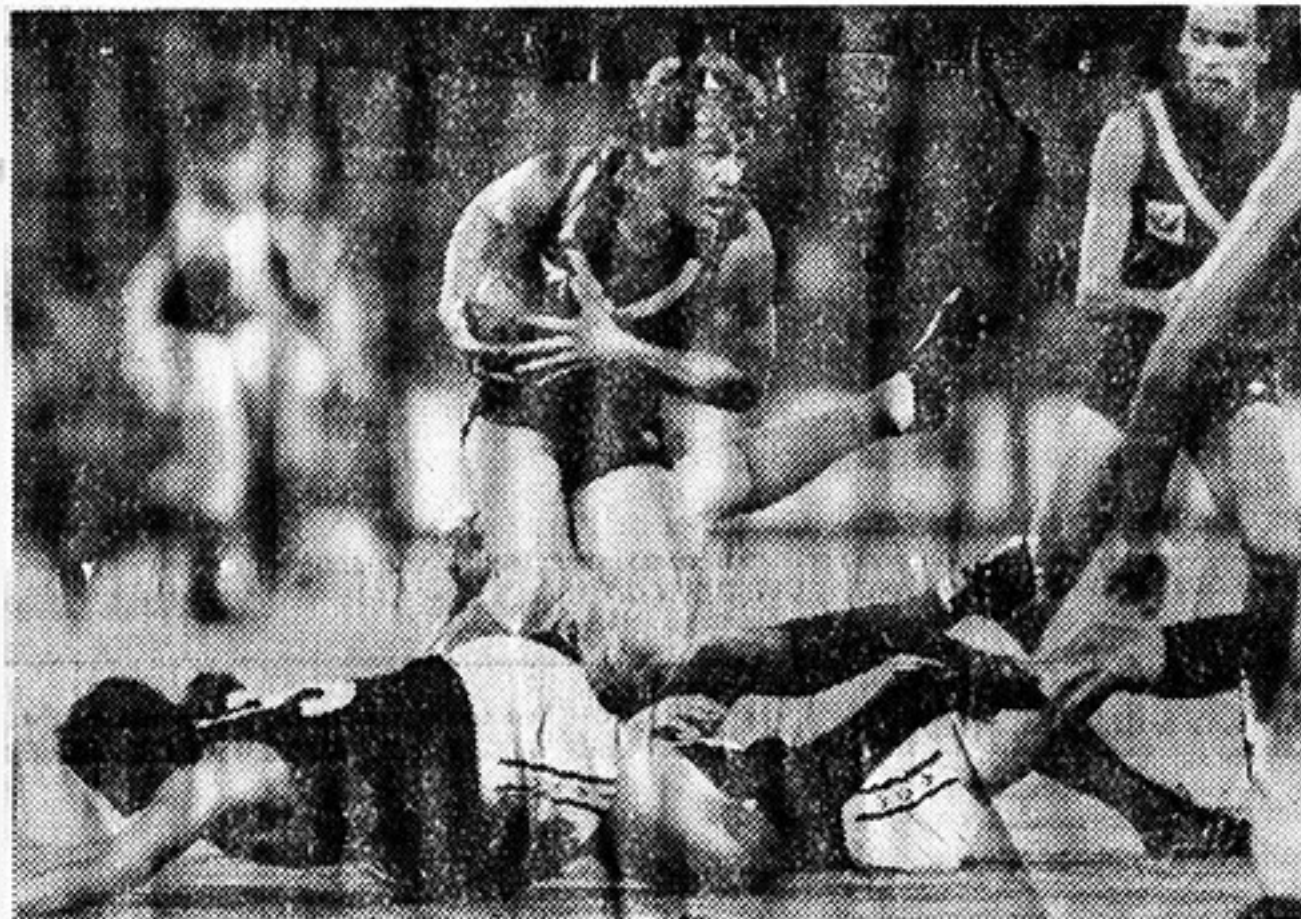
Crowd: 43,143.

Centreman Craig Bradley, who won the Fos Williams Medal as SA's best player, was quick and creative. Michael Aish displayed courage that was contagious and his quick hands and quick thinking exposed the Victorian defences time and again.

Then there was rover Mark Naley with the Fred Astaire feet.

He embarrassed Victoria's Paul Meldrum to such a degree that Sheedy was forced to switch Heard off Platten to try to quell him — but it was futile.

And with Heard pre-occupied with Naley, John Platten "arrived" like a dart in the heart of Victoria.



SA star Craig Bradley crashes through the pack to send SA into attack against Victoria last night.

MATCH STATISTICS

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Player	Kicks	Mks	H'ball	H.O.	Pts.
Aish, M.	11	3	8	-	8
Anderson	15	7	11	-	8
Bolton	6	2	10	-	6
Bradley	19	5	14	-	8
Campbell	13	2	2	-	6
Craig	1	-	-	-	-
Dietrich	4	2	1	-	4
Fielke	6	2	5	-	4
Hughes	5	2	2	4	4
Kernahan, S.	14	8	3	8	8
Lindsay	11	4	2	-	7
McDermott	12	4	12	-	7
McGuinness	9	1	2	-	5
Naley	15	1	7	-	8
Parker	-	1	1	2	2
Phillips, G.	6	4	8	2	4
Platten	14	3	6	-	7
Redden	4	3	4	16	6
Salisbury	15	2	5	-	6
Thomas, K.	3	1	1	-	2
Williams, C.	3	2	3	1	5
Williams, M.	3	2	5	-	4
Totals	189	61	112	33	

(Merit points by Michelangelo Rucci)

VICTORIA

Player	Kicks	Mks	H'ball	H.O.	Pts.
Alvin	14	2	2	-	5
Brereton	14	7	3	-	6
Carroll	5	2	3	-	4
Clark	13	3	1	-	6
Dean	2	3	2	-	2
Dip'omenico	9	2	2	-	4
Foulds	14	1	2	-	5
Harvey	12	7	5	-	5
Hawker	10	2	1	-	5
Healy	3	2	2	-	2
Heard	6	-	3	-	3
Loveridge	3	-	7	-	3
Meldrum	4	4	6	-	3
Merrett	8	2	4	2	4
Pert	8	2	1	-	4
Poole	12	9	2	-	6
Raines	7	3	5	-	4
Salmon	9	8	3	5	5
Walsh	9	6	7	17	6
Weightman	12	2	7	-	6
Williams	16	4	7	-	7
Yeates	2	1	4	1	2
Totals	192	72	79	25	

SA, down eight points at quarter time, hauled itself to within two points at half-time.

Then in 30 fantastic minutes of football it played itself into a winning position.

Flattered by the delirious crowd which came to Football Park wanting heroes, every SA player began to perform as if his very life depended on this one game.

They hit, they hurt and they ran on wounded legs and gradually the game started to turn.

There were signs of panic on the Victorian bench as Sheedy pulled moves left, right and centre in a bid to block SA's surge.

With Grenville Dietrich working desperately hard near the goal square for three goals and Stephen Kernahan finally unleashing his talents for another three super goals, SA kicked 8.3 to 5.0 to be 19 points in front with 30 minutes to go.

When Cornes sent his players back into battle for the last time it was going to be a victory of endurance as much as anything else.

And it was obvious early in that thrilling last quarter the lead SA had earned was not going to be allowed to perish so fruitlessly.

With failure echoing around inside their heads the Victorians launched themselves for one more attack.

It got to within seven points after 20 minutes before SA regrouped with every player taking suicidal risks to ensure victory.

And with two minutes to go and SA leading 18.17 to 17.14 Salisbury came out of defence to block a threatening Victorian attack right on the boot.

It was like a nice little left hook to the liver of the Victorians and they never recovered.