

Monday, September 19, 1988

Clinical Glenelg genuine threat

Frustration and despair for Bulldogs

By LEO SCHLINK
and ANDREW BOTH

Glenelg	1.0	9.3	10.4	12.9	(81)
Central	1.10	4.10	6.16	7.18	(60)

SCORERS — Glenelg: West 4.0, Gibbs 3.3, Melican, Hodgeman 1.1, Marshall, Hewett, Budarick 1.0, Carey, McDermott 0.1, rushed 0.2. Central: Mandemaker 3.2, Lee, Lally, Prior, van Dommele 1.0, Chaplin 0.3, Braddy, Kickett, Bubner, Louder, Thomas 0.2, Allan 0.1, rushed 0.2.

BEST — Glenelg: A. Stringer, McDermott, Carey, West, Seebom, Hodgeman, Hewett, Gibbs. Central: van Dommele, Kickett, Schwerdt, Lee.

Umpires — J. Hylton, M. Abbott.
Crowd — 20,377.

Yesterday's stars

A. Stringer (G)	5
C. McDermott (G)	4
P. Carey (G)	3
R. van Dommele (CD)	2
J. West (G)	1

By
ALAN SHIELL

Glenelg's professional dismantling of Sturt and Central District at Football Park over the past two Sundays suggests it will qualify for its fourth consecutive grand final — and be a legitimate challenger to Port Adelaide for the 1988 league premiership.

It will be one of the great revivals of football history if Norwood can recover from its pathetic effort against Port on Saturday and beat Glenelg in Sunday's preliminary final.

Norwood will argue that the blustery conditions for the second semi-final hardly could have been worse, that it will be reinforced by the return of Garry McIntosh and John Hall and that only two of its eight minor-round losses this season were in successive matches — to North Adelaide at Norwood Oval and Port at Adelaide Park in the 12th and 13th series.

But Port still handled the conditions impressively enough while stomping all over its traditional rival and restricting it to a miserable 2.5 — the lowest score in an SA final — in what surely must be the most humiliating day Norwood has endured since the club was formed in 1878.

Norwood's lowest score is 0.5 — at Alberton Oval on May 15, 1909. Port scored 1.4.

In stark contrast to Norwood's woes and shame, Glenelg's 21-point defeat of Central in yesterday's first semi-final was another indication of the confidence, class and composure the Tigers have mustered and linked at the most appropriate time of the season.

A strong southerly wind and a slippery surface again made conditions difficult yesterday, although not as tough as they were on Saturday.

Glenelg was assisted by Central's fatal inaccuracy (7.18) in kicking for goal, just as Sturt (4.19) helped Glenelg the previous Sunday.

In its two finals appearances, Glenelg has aggregated 27.21 against a combined tally of 11.37.

Glenelg coach Graham Cornes last night did not put much store on Norwood's failure against Port, pointing to the conditions and saying the preliminary final was "a brand new ball game".

Of yesterday's game, Cornes said: "Cut-throat finals are never easy. Central was still at it and still threatening, even in the last quarter.

"While the scoreboard suggested it was a comfortable-enough win, I was never confident until the time-on period of the last quarter.

"The pleasing aspect was that we were able to control the ball when it was loose and in the majority of packs and we used it better."

Central, like Sturt, was exposed as being too young and inexperienced and just not quite good enough to successfully tackle a shrewd, seasoned campaigner in a final.

Like Sturt, Central lacked sufficient players to strike sparks of activity and creativity when needed most.

Central and Sturt injected much life and interest into the competition this season. They will be better for the experience and it will be a surprise if they go backwards next winter.

Central virtually booted away its victory hopes yesterday by scoring only 1.10 with the wind in the first quarter, just as Sturt managed only 0.8 last week.

The 'Dogs' 2.6 in the third quarter meant they collected 3.16 with the wind, 4.2 against it. Glenelg scored 10.8 with the wind, 2.1 against it.

Glenelg responded to Central's erratic start — 10 straight behinds before Mark Prior goaled 28 minutes into the first term — with a powerful, match-winning second-quarter surge, in which it added 8.3, including six goals in a paralyzing 8½-minute burst from the half-way mark.

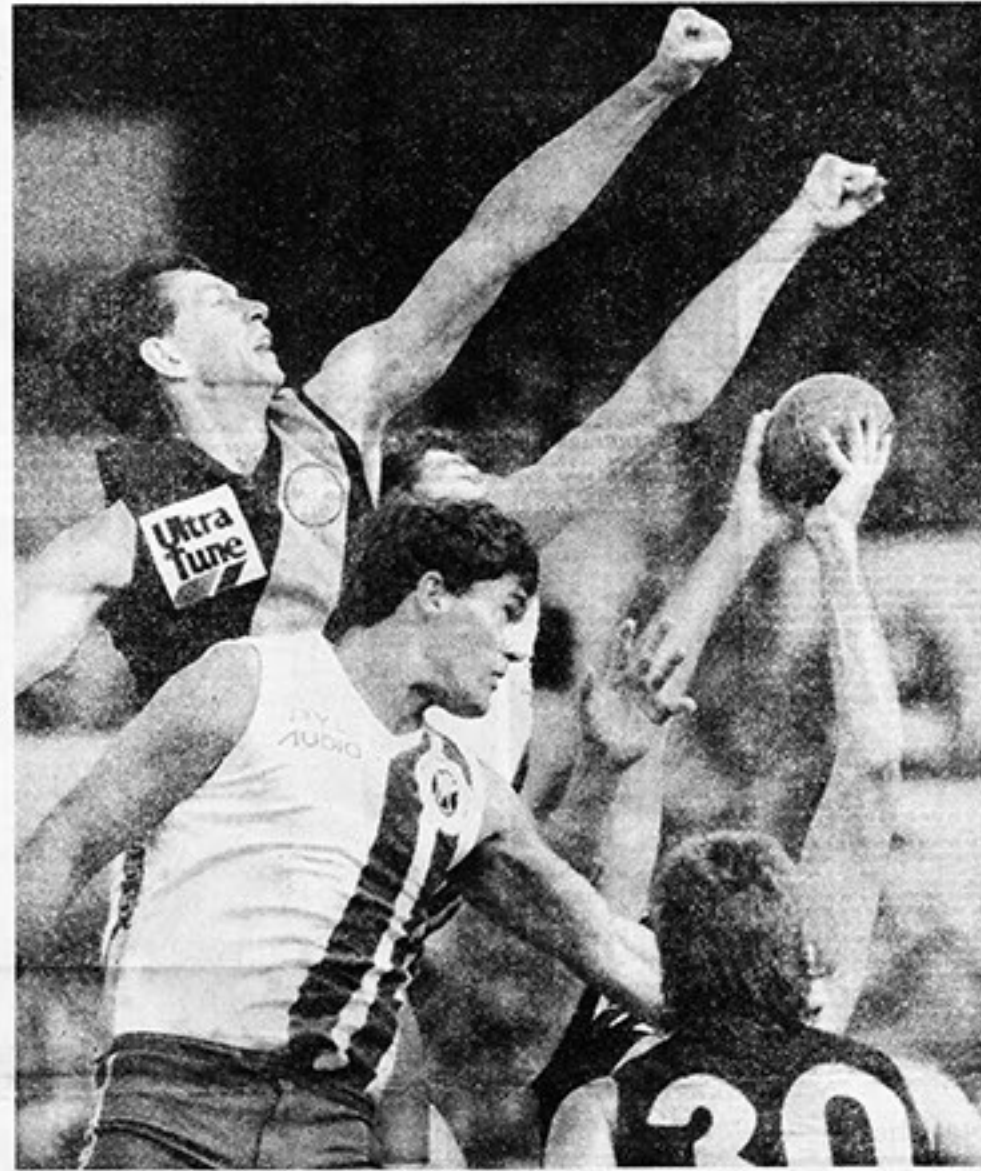
Centre half-forward Jim West kicked three of them — three long bombs that sailed on and on — and, with his strong marking and kicking, always was a force.

Alan Stringer was a consistent, penetrative centreman, follower Chris McDermott, as usual, kept feeding grateful team-mates, ruckman Peter Carey was his usual Trojan self, John Seebom closed centre half-back, rover Kym Hodgeman and wingman Mark Hewett continued their good form of the previous Sunday and recalled Ross Gibbs, typically, was either super-cool or spectacular, whether up forward or loose in defence.

Central had reason to be pleased with the work of followers Rene van Dommele and Derek Kickett, who also had stints at centre in his best game of the season, wingman Stephen Schwerdt and back pocket Scott Lee.

The wet, windy weather and the live telecasts of the Victorian preliminary final and the Olympic Games from Seoul had some effect on crowd figures at the weekend.

The SA National Football League would, or should, have expected much bigger attendances than 27,048 on Saturday and 20,377 yesterday — although the four-finals' figure of 87,649 is only 6758 down on that of last season.



FAILING FISTS ... Glenelg centre half-back John Seebom and Central's Keith Allan leap over Bulldog ruckman Richard Louder in an unsuccessful attempt to spoil at Football Park yesterday. The football is in the safe hands of an unidentified Tiger player. Picture: CRAIG SILLITOE

Little maestro turns it on

Poised Glenelg utility Ross Gibbs sometimes looks out of place among the hurly-burly of league football.

As he struts around the field, seemingly without a care in the world, he provides a striking contrast to some of his more intense team-mates.

In the past, Glenelg's selectors have usually tolerated Gibbs's apparently less than dedicated attitude towards the game.

But last month they decided to put a rocket up their little maestro — by dropping him to the reserves for the match against Norwood in the 19th minor series.

Gibbs was less than happy to have to display his precious skills in the curtain-raisers, but he knuckled down to the task of earning a recall to the league team.

He played one more league match in the minor round, before returning to the reserves, where he played in last week's elimination final.

His performance there was good enough to earn another recall for yesterday's first semi-final against Central District at Football Park.

Gibbs, 28, certainly justified his selection with another vintage performance.

He had two roles. In the first and third quarters he played as a loose man in defence while Central kicked with the aid of a howling gale.

During the other two terms, while Glenelg had the wind in its favor, he occupied a forward pocket.

It was in the forward lines that he caused the most damage. After Cen-

tral frittered away several excellent scoring opportunities in the first quarter, kicking 1.10, it was Glenelg's turn to bombard the northern goal.

Would Glenelg kick be more accurately? It took Gibbs only two minutes to provide the answer.

Snaring the ball deep in the right forward pocket, he fired from an almost impossible angle 35 metres out.

The goal umpire hardly moved. Psychologically this was a crushing blow to Central — one which set the tone for the rest of the day.

Twenty-one minutes into the term Gibbs scored another goal from an even more acute angle, although he was slightly closer to goal.

Then, late in the last quarter, he sealed Glenelg's victory with a 50-metre goal from an equally difficult angle in the left pocket, allowing the breeze to bend the ball back between the posts.

As if his goals didn't cause Central supporters enough anguish, they will be even less pleased to learn that Gibbs wasn't even attempting to score with the kick that resulted in his first goal.

"I was just trying to kick it to the square and it went through," he said.

"Yes, it was good to be back in the league side. It was a bit of a setback to be dropped and a few people expected me to spit the dummy, but Cornes and I had a few words between the two of us and I accepted it."

Andrew Both

Ambushed again! Central District, for the eighth successive finals match, has been shoved on to the highway to nowhere.

Central, possibly more than any other SA National Football League club, inspires huge peaks and troughs.

Yesterday, in the aftermath of Central's 21-point first semi-final loss, frustration and despair were evident on the faces of most Bulldog players, officials and backers.

Even the club's progression from eighth last season to fourth could not prevent a sombre president Robert Zerella from saying: "Another wasted year. We get to second and still can't win a final."

General manager Kris Grant echoed Zerella's thoughts, pondering aloud how difficult it was to succeed in the major round: "It would be nice to win just one final."

Using language more likely to be found in racing circles, disappointed coach Neil Kerley observed: "We'll be much better for it."

"They used the ball better than we did. It's as simple as that. The game was won and lost in the first half. We had to do better with our opportunities with the wind in the first quarter."

"To their credit the players never gave in."

Perhaps Central's cheer squad banner carried the most telling message of all. It read: "Please don't break our heart. C'mon you Dogs, this time more than any other."

Glenelg's was simple and also directed at the hapless Bulldog camp, saying: "Centrals (sic) welcome to your nightmare."

Meanwhile Glenelg should be almost at full strength for Sunday's preliminary final against Norwood at Football Park.

Follower Peter Maynard and forward Craig Budarick were injured during yesterday's first semi-final against Central District, but not seriously.

Maynard left the field in the first quarter with a bruised calf and did not return, while Budarick hobbled off late in the match with a bruised hip.

Glenelg officials are confident the pair will be fit by Sunday, but longer-term casualties Chris Duthy (calf) and Tony Symonds (elbow) are not expected to be considered for selection.

Duthy has resumed only light training, while Symonds is unlikely to play again this season, even if Glenelg plays in the grand final on Saturday week.

Norwood also is likely to field nearly its strongest possible line-up, with leading ruckman John Hall and centreman Garry McIntosh returning after sitting out Saturday's second semi-final against Port Adelaide.

Versatile Brenton Maynard suffered a bruised back during the debacle against the Magpies and his condition will be assessed at training this week.

Maynard also must front league commissioner Brian Martin, QC, at Football Park tonight to answer a charge arising from Saturday's match.

He was reported by goal umpire Ken Anderson for allegedly attempting to strike Port's Darren Smith during the third quarter.

Norwood, of course, will again be without centre half-back Craig Kelly, who has served one match of a five-game suspension.

Port had a short run through the streets of Alberton yesterday morning, and will train again tomorrow, Thursday and Saturday.

It has a full complement of players to pick its grand final team from, except for captain Russell Johnston, who will complete his five-match suspension on grand final day.