

Bays survive battle of two halves

The preliminary final

By Paul Dowling

	1st	2nd	3rd	Final	Pts
GLENELG...	2.3	8.6	9.7	11.10	(76)
NORWOOD.	1.1	2.5	7.10	10.11	(71)

SA's football public yesterday was looking for something special.

Starved of tight, exciting finishes for the first two weeks of the major round, it was hoping the Glenelg-Norwood preliminary final would break the boredom.

And the crowd of 28,375 left Football Park satisfied.

The crowd had received its money's worth by witnessing a close, pressure-packed contest which saw Glenelg advance to its fourth successive grand final with only five points to spare.

It was a titanic battle played in two halves.

Glenelg with 8.6 to 2.5 took the first half honors, Norwood with 8.6 to 3.4 the second.

In the final analysis Glenelg was the better side... just.

With their wealth of experienced players capable of performing in a crisis, the Tigers were able to withstand a stunning second-half recovery from their opponents.

The 'Legs had been in big trouble at the long change.

Coach Neil Balme's attempts to silence Glenelg playmakers Alan Stringer and Peter Maynard with Brenton Klaebe and Stephen Richardson had been partially successful, but the Tigers had used other options.

Rovers Chris McDermott and Darren Mansell had been dynamic, David Marshall was well on top of Duncan Fosdike on a centre wing and Maynard was earning plenty of possessions despite Richardson's attention.

Midway through the second term, when Glenelg's advantage was only minimal, a 32-man brawl erupted on the grandstand wing when the pressure and closeness of the contest inevitably triggered players tempers.

After the players broke up Glenelg steadied to slam on 4.2 to Norwood's 0.2 in the remaining 10 minutes of the quarter.

Balme had to make changes at half time and his decision to send interchange players Richard Anderson and Justin Staritski into the game was almost a matchwinner.

BEST — GLENELG: McDermott, Marshall, Salisbury, W. Stringer, Mansell, West, Hewett, Budarick, Grenvold. **NORWOOD:** Klaebe, Hall, Tanner, Warhurst, Helyar, Richardson, Anderson, Ducker, Payne.

SCORERS — GLENELG: Budarick 3.0, Mansell 2.3, Hodgeman 2.1, Melican 1.0, Carey 1.0, McDermott 1.0, Christie 1.0, West 0.1, Marshall 0.1, Hewett 0.1, rushed 0.3.

NORWOOD: Ducker 3.4, Aish 2.1, R. Maynard 1.1, Anderson 1.1, Payne 1.1, Hall 1.0, Staritski 1.0, Buckley 0.1, Richardson 0.1, rushed 0.1.

INJURIES — GLENELG: A. Stringer (concussion). **NORWOOD:** Scanlon (bruised shoulder).

UMPIRES — Michael Abbott and Rick Kinnear.

Anderson, with his blistering pace and lightning disposals, ignited the 'Legs and changed the direction of the game.

And Staritski displayed all his immense potential with some highly-skilled efforts.

With Richardson, David Payne, Klaebe and Stephen Pettit also slipping into top gear, Norwood cut its deficit to nine points at the final change.

Then in the hectic final quarter Mark Ducker kicked truly after 16 minutes to reduce the margin to just five points.

It appeared Glenelg's notorious last-half fade-outs had returned to haunt it again.

But with a brilliant goal to Budarick — his second for the quarter — the Tigers regained some breathing space.

Despite another goal to Ducker three minutes later, Glenelg was able to cling to its lead and escape with victory.

"It was all or nothing out there," a relieved Glenelg coach Graham Cornes said after the game.

"Norwood only needed a couple of goals to get their tales up in the second half and that's exactly what happened.

"We were fortunate we made the most of our opportunities and converted efficiently."

Balme, who described some astonishing first half umpiring interpretations as "crippling"

to Norwood's cause, said the Redlegs should have won the match.

"The wheels fell off in the second quarter but we should still have won the game," he said.

"In the end we didn't have enough players capable of taking charge of a game."

The match was highlighted by some absorbing individual clashes.

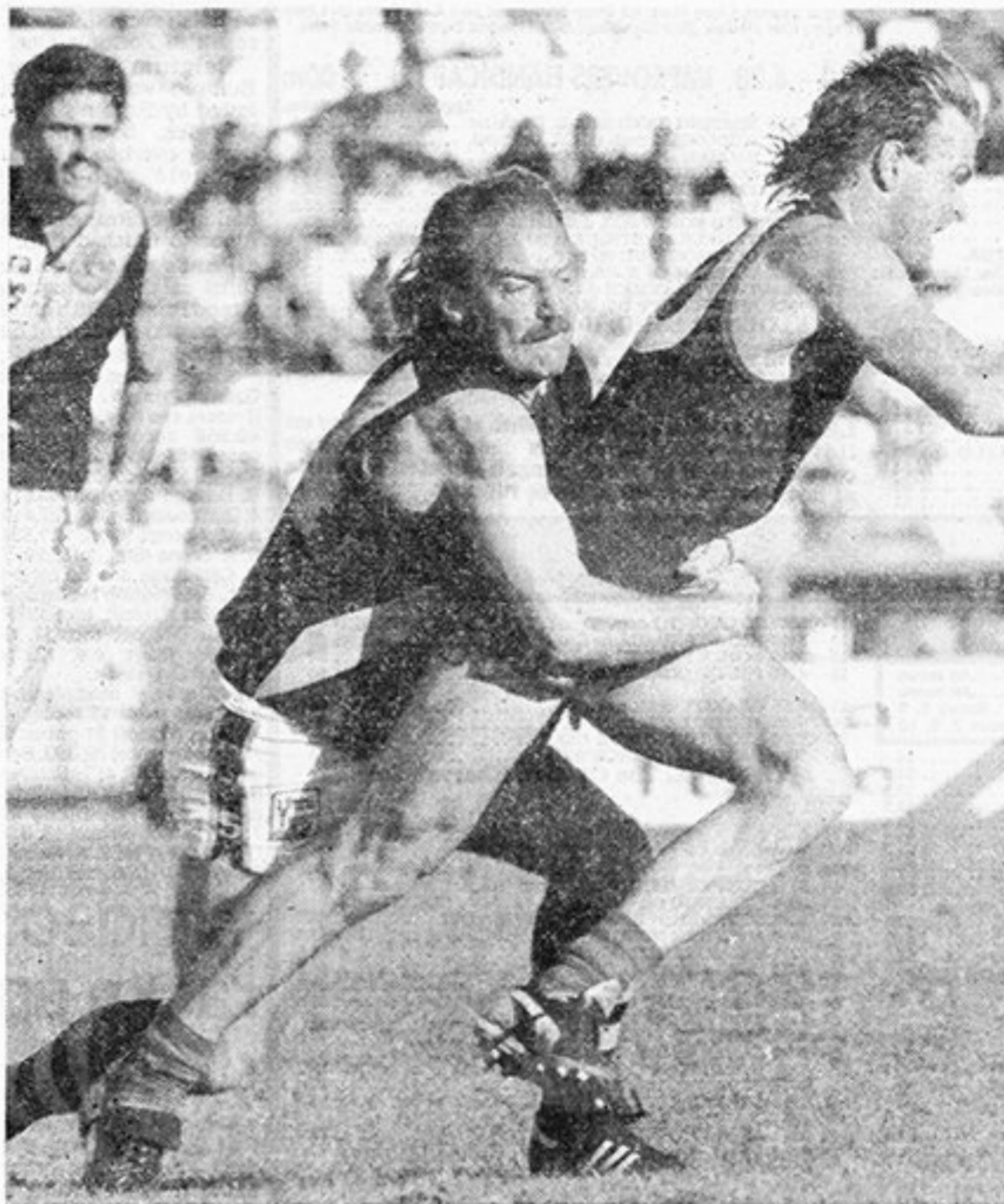
Jim West at centre half-forward fought all day to gain the upper hand over Tom Warhurst and with nine marks may just have succeeded.

Alongside him Craig Budarick and Wayne Tanner fought a close battle for three quarters before Budarick kicked two telling goals against Jarrod Thorpe in the last term.

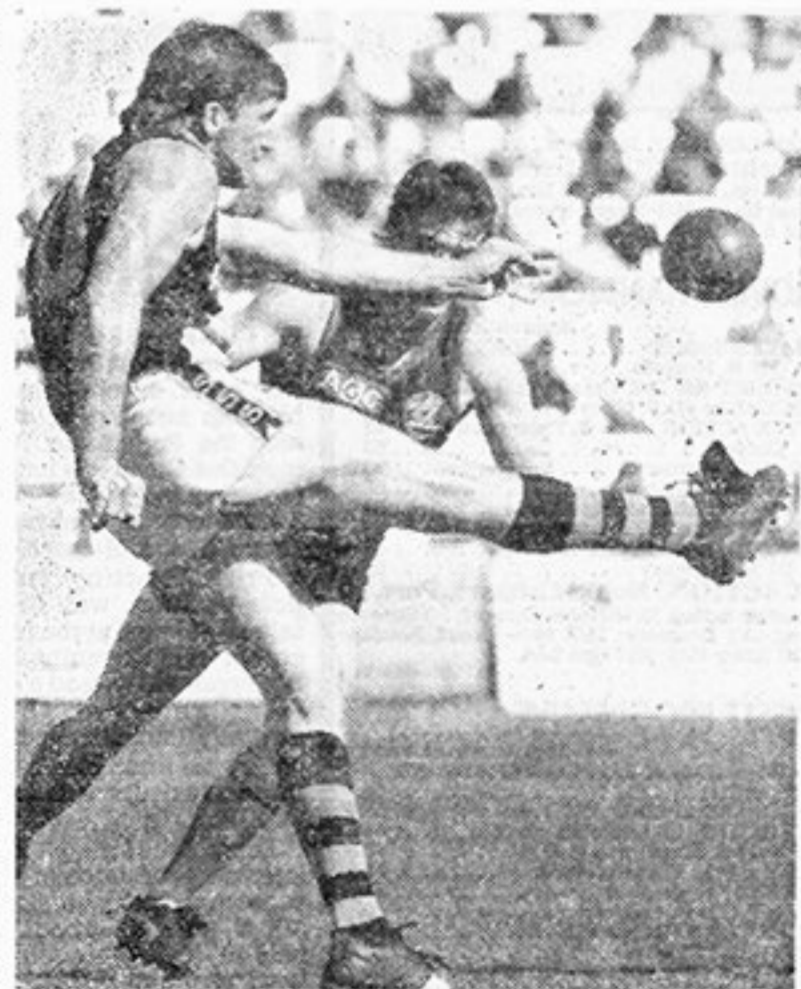
Klaebe silenced Alan Stringer before the Glenelg centreman left the ground concussed in the third quarter and the rucking honors went to John Hall.

He was more threatening around the ground than Glenelg captain Peter Carey and his 23 hit-outs were just as effective.

The experience of Glenelg's Dennis Russell against the youth of Mark Ducker at full forward, was another evenly-matched highlight.



● Bay rover Kym Hodgeman applies a tough tackle to Norwood's Lester Ross. Picture: Chris Mangan



● Glenelg's Chris McDermott clears despite pressure from Redleg rover David Payne at Football Park yesterday. Picture: Chris Mangan

Finals Series so far...

Elimination Final:	Glenelg	15-12	d. Sturt	4-19
Qualifying Final:	Norwood	15-10	d. Centrals	8-13
First Semi Final:	Glenelg	12-9	d. Centrals	7-18
Second Semi Final:	Port	10-17	d. Norwood	2-5
Preliminary Final:	Glenelg	11-10	d. Norwood	10-11
Next Week:	Grand Final - Port v Glenelg			