

Premiership table

	W	L	D	F	A	%	Pts
PORT	9	4	0	1390	1199	53.69	18
CENTRAL*	8	3	1	1431	1033	58.08	17
NORTH	8	4	1	1312	1044	55.69	17
GLENELG	8	5	0	1477	1094	57.45	16
NORWOOD	8	5	0	1465	1127	56.52	16
Sturt	8	5	0	1538	1329	53.64	16
Torrens*	5	7	0	1032	1377	42.84	10
Woodville	4	9	0	1332	1584	45.68	8
West*	3	9	0	1029	1358	43.11	6
South*	1	11	0	844	1705	33.11	2

* Playing today.

Leading goalkickers

	Games	Y'day	Total
S. Nichols (Woodville)	11	8.3	54.14
J. Roberts (North)	13	6.1	51.30
I. Willmott (Sturt)	9	5.2	41.18
R. Mander (Central)*	11	—	39.18
S. Hodges (Port)	12	3.0	37.15
L. Schache (Sturt)	12	1.1	33.15
D. Payne (Norwood)	13	3.1	31.14
C. Budarick (Glenelg)	12	—	30.19
M. Aish (Norwood)	13	0.1	28.10
D. Smith (Port)	13	1.1	27.15
D. Jackson (South)*	11	—	25.21

* Playing today.

Football Park

PORT	6.1	8.6	12.8	18.9	(117)
NORWOOD	2.3	5.8	7.10	9.11	(65)

BEST — PORT: Leslie, Phillips, Smith, Foster, Brown, Haynes, Harrison, Borlase, Delaney. NORWOOD: Norwood: Hall, Aish, McIntosh.

GOALS — PORT: Hynes 5.0, Harrison, Hodges 3.0, Foster 2.1, Brown, Smith 1.1, Belton, Johnston, Kennedy 1.0, Abernethy 0.1, rushed 0.2. NORWOOD: Payne 3.1, Balme 2.2, R. Maynard 2.0, Anderson, McNeil 1.0, van der Meer 0.3, Rowe 0.2, Aish, Kelly, McIntosh 0.1.

INJURIES — PORT: B. Abernethy (left knee ligaments). NORWOOD: B. Klabe (bruised shoulder).

UMPIRES — M. Abbott, R. Campbell.

Adelaide Oval

STURT	2.1	7.4	17.8	21.12	(133)
GLENELG	6.0	12.3	17.5	20.6	(126)

BEST — STURT: S. Russell, Dilena, K. Russell, Paynter, McWilliam, Field, Kitschke. GLENELG: McDermott, Hodgeman, MacTavish, Salisbury, A. Stringer.

GOALS — STURT: Willmott 5.2, Field 4.2, K. Russell 4.0, Dilena 3.2, Paynter 2.0, S. Russell 1.2, Schache 1.1, Lennon 1.0; Kitschke 0.1, rushed 0.2. GLENELG: Hodgeman 4.2, Winton 3.2, Carey 3.0, Mansell 3.0, Maynard 2.1, MacTavish 2.0, A. Stringer 1.0, West 1.0, Marshall 1.0, Grenvold 0.1. **UMPIRES** — David Elliott, John Hyton.

Woodville Oval

NORTH	7.3	14.8	16.10	20.13	(133)
WOODVILLE	4.5	7.9	13.11	16.13	(109)

BEST — NORTH: Redden, A. Jarman, D. Jarman, Craig, J. Riley, Tiller, Hart. WOODVILLE: Nichols, Panizza, Haylock, Harper, O'Dwyer, Negri, Klug.

GOALS — NORTH: Roberts 6.1, D. Jarman 4.1, Wildy 2.1, Barratt 2.0, Sims 2.0, S. Riley 1.1, A. Jarman 1.0, Sanders 1.0, Redden 1.0, Bennett 0.2, Tiller 0.1, Burton 0.1, rushed 0.5. WOODVILLE: Nichols 8.3, Harper 4.2, Klug 2.1, Harris 1.1, McDonald 1.0, Panizza 0.1, Schwartz 0.1, Schimmelbusch 0.1, Champion 0.1, rushed 0.2. **UMPIRES** — Rick Kinnear and David Trembath.

Next week

ROUND 14

SATURDAY: North Adelaide v Port Adelaide (Football Park), Norwood v West Adelaide (Adelaide Oval), Central District v South Adelaide (Elizabeth), Glenelg v Woodville (Glenelg), West Torrens v Sturt (Thebarton).

What the coaches said Finest comeback

■ **MERVYN KEANE (Sturt):** "They got a break on us and we knew we had to do something otherwise it would have been a waste of a Saturday afternoon."

"It was the finest comeback since I have been at Sturt (since 1985). I think we have grown up as a side."

■ **GRAHAM CORNES (Glenelg):** "It was an extremely good game of football, the best I have seen this year."

"It was played in two halves. We allowed them to get back in the game, and when we did, it was anyone's game."

Port pays high price for win



Bruce Abernethy... knee injury

Port Adelaide may have paid a huge price for its crushing 52-point victory over Norwood yesterday.

Follower Bruce Abernethy was stretched from Football Park midway through the second term and may have damaged ligaments in his left knee.

Club team manager Jim Nitschke claimed the injury didn't appear "too bad" and a full assessment could not be done until this morning.

The concern for Abernethy took the shine off Port's superb performance, proof that it is a genuine contender for this finals series.

Port launched itself to the top of the ladder, but this may be only temporary because Central District clashes with the beleaguered West Torrens in

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the second of a double-header at Football Park today.

And Sturt is looming as a big finals threat.

Its 12-point triumph over Glenelg at Adelaide Oval was described by Glenelg coach Graham Cornes as the best match he had seen this year.

Sturt trailed by 35 points 40 seconds into the third quarter but then slammed on 10 goals for the term, a recovery rated by coach Mervyn Keane as the club's finest since he joined it in 1985.

The victory was full of merit and has placed tremendous pressure on Glenelg and Norwood.

Sturt, which was eighth after the sixth series, is now sixth but level with Glenelg and Norwood on 16 points.

It was Glenelg's fourth loss in five weeks and for the first time this season it is lower than second.

But it also lost four out of the last five minor round series last season and still contested the grand final.

Glenelg, despite yesterday's loss, may still possess the tenacity and resources to make a similar comeback.

North Adelaide, which beat Woodville by 24 points at Woodville Oval, has moved into third spot on 17 points.

And the scene is now set for a superb contest between North and Port, victors over Norwood the past two series, at Football Park this Saturday.

The thirteenth series will be completed with today's double-header, beginning with West Adelaide v South Adelaide at 12.30 followed by Torrens v Central at 3.20.

Mighty Sturt comeback

The Sturt rooms at half-time were engulfed with gloom as the scoreboard showed Glenelg leading by 29 points at Adelaide Oval.

Some fans may have believed then that Sturt's bid to make the finals was purely a fantasy.

But coach Mervyn Keane, although concerned, had lost no faith in his men. He told them they needed to work that little harder if they really wanted to compete on the same level as the top sides.

It must have been motivating because Sturt unleashed a magnificent comeback, an effort which Keane later described as the club's finest since he had been at the helm.

Sturt came from 35 points down 40 seconds into the third term to snatch the lead twice, the second time on the siren at the 33-minute mark for a three-point lead.

Keane admitted that last year the players probably would have thought they had done enough.

Not this time. They continued fighting and showed tremendous qualities to win by 12 points.

In essence, Sturt has grown up. It no longer considers itself a kid playing with the big boys.

Included in yesterday's side were 12 players who were introduced to league football by Keane.

Maybe, finally, Sturt has escaped from the Jack Oatey shadow. Its resurgence since the seventh series — six victories — could only be attributed to Keane's influence and a general lift in confidence and pride throughout the team and club.

Glenelg fans may well say their side lost because of its long list of injured players and Peter Carey, who was left in a forward pocket for most of the day, almost didn't play because of the 'flu.

Sure, it had players out — Craig Budarick, Tony Symonds, John Schneebichler, Chris Duthy, Wayne Stringer, Craig Woodlands and Brett Deane.

But so did Sturt. Missing were Tony McCarthy, Peter Daish, Leo Darveniza, Andrew Downes, David Frost, Chris McGowan and Andrew Underwood.

The fact was that Glenelg lacked Sturt's

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enthusiasm, pace and class when the going was tough in a desperate second half.

The magnificent contest, highlighted by some strong marking, superb tackling and excellent team play from both sides, was reminiscent of Sturt's golden days.

Carey's ill health saw Glenelg coach Graham Cornes use Gary Christie in ruck most of the time.

The plan worked as well as it could as Christie was competitive, especially in the first half, and Carey took some fine marks and kicked three goals.

Sturt was able to recover because its big men, Damian Kitschke and David Reynolds, had a greater influence in the second half.

This allowed the likes of Kym and Scott Russell, Carl Dilena, Scott Field and John Paynter to have more opportunities, until the whole team believed it was near invincible.

Sturt, like Glenelg, worked extremely hard for every possession. A difference between the sides was that Sturt finished off its play better.

Lurking in the goalsquare, always a threat, was Ian Willmott, who kicked five goals.

Sturt's determination to keep going regardless of the odds was typified by young defender Bruce Lennon.

Early in the game it seemed cruel to leave the rookie on Carey, the legend, but as the game wore on, Lennon also grew in stature.

Glenelg lost four of its last five minor round matches last season but still went on to contest the grand final.

It lost yesterday, but it was certainly not disgraced. An encouraging sign was its commitment to winning the hard ball. Chris McDermott, Scott Salisbury, Alan Stringer and Peter Maynard, as usual, tried their best.

Glenelg is down, but not out. Other sides would have struggled to kick five goals during Sturt's third quarter blitz.

It would be an injustice, based on yesterday's grand display of top football, if Sturt did not make the finals.