

Redlegs win battle of the gladiators

By Chief Football Writer
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FIGHT FOR THE FLAG



Norwood	4.3	5.6	11.9	14.13	(97)
Glenelg	3.1	9.3	11.5	14.8	(92)

SCORERS — Norwood: Ducker 3.1, Aish 3.0, Payne 2.1, Pascoe 2.0, Francis 1.3, McIntosh 1.1, Pyke, Staritski 1.0, Maynard 0.3, Thomas 0.1, rushed 0.3. **Glenelg:** Budarick 5.2, Jameson 2.0, Bow, Symonds, Chigwidden 1.1, Mansell, Fidge, McDermott, West 1.0, Marshall 0.2, rushed 0.1.

BEST — Norwood: Aish, McIntosh, Francis, Maynard, Almond, Kelly. **Glenelg:** Melican, McDermott, Budarick, Maynard, Jameson, Marshall.

UMPIRES: Laurie Argent, John Hyton.

within 49 secs. and injected life into the side, while Kelly quelled Maynard's brilliance and Tanner began to win the ball out of the centre square.

Cornes replied with changes, the most noticeable being David Marshall from a wing to centre.

However, Norwood was on a roll, especially with magical goals from James Pyke with a towering punt from 55 metres and Tony Francis with a damaging left-foot snap.

Glenelg kicked only two goals in the third term — both from Budarick — and saw its lead whittled and eventually lost, to trail by four points at three quarter time.

Norwood's lead didn't seem big enough considering it was about to kick against the breeze, but what was to follow, by both sides, was remarkable, desperation footy.

These were the highlights of the last quarter which deserve to be recorded and long remembered.

1 min. 54 secs.: Jim West, who had rarely been sighted and was shifted from centre half-forward to full forward, took a sensational mark over Norwood's Tom Warhurst and kicked a goal to give Glenelg the lead.

4.27: Glenelg attacked again, and a calculated gamble by Warhurst to meet the ball in a race with Glenelg's Darren Mansell, paid off. Had he not got there, Glenelg would have kicked a certain goal.

5.19: Norwood burst through to centre half-forward and looked like scoring when Glenelg back-pocket Tony MacTavish applied a superb tackle on Francis.

6.11: Norwood again had the ball across half-forward and Aish, who was on his knees, cleverly "stole" the ball from an opponent and handballed to McIntosh who miraculously steered it through from deep in the left pocket.

10.04: To the roar of Glenelg fans, McIntosh came off second best in a fierce clash of bodies with ruckman Chris Melican, who was clearly Glenelg's best player.

14.17: Darren Visser's desperation on a wing allowed Ducker to mark and goal, to put Norwood back in front.

15.43: Budarick took another spectacular mark to again wrestle the lead back.

This goal proved to be Glenelg's last score for the season, but not without having chances foiled by Norwood's resilient defenders, watching Norwood falter under pressure by kicking into the man on the mark three times, and noticing the frustration pour from Norwood when behinds were kicked.

The ultimate showing of anxiety came when McIntosh, who was furious with a decision by Laurie Argent, took off his guernsey and offered it to him.

But the agony disappeared with that crucial Ducker mark to give Norwood its winning five-point lead.

There were many heroes on both sides — Norwood had Aish and McIntosh with their inspirational hardwork and team play, Tony Francis with a top rover's effort, Rodney Maynard who was creative at centre half-forward, Kelly with his nullifying of Peter Maynard, and Stephen Almond for being a pillar of strength at centre half-back.

After years of having Peter Carey producing champion efforts in ruck, Glenelg was served magnificently by his protege, Melican.

Captain Chris McDermott also tried valiantly, as did Maynard, Budarick and 19-year-old Rodney Jameson, who is one of the finest young players in the league.

As the crowd dispersed from Football Park, one Glenelg fan quipped: "Look on the bright side, we won't lose the grand final".

Hopefully, the game on Saturday, October 7 will be just as great.

Cornes unhappy with umpiring

Glenelg coach Graham Cornes savaged the performance of field umpire John Hyton immediately after the Tigers' five-point elimination final loss to Norwood at Football Park yesterday.

Cornes, in praising Norwood's high standard, rounded on Hyton with: "I would have preferred they did enough to win without the assistance of one umpire in particular."

"John Hyton's umpiring was disgraceful. In finals, the umpiring is supposed to be of finals standard," he said.

Cornes said his comments should not be construed as sour grapes — both Glenelg and Norwood appeared to have had reason to be displeased with some of Hyton's and colleague Laurie Argent's interpretations.

Two final-quarter decisions, in particular, seemed to irate normally imperturbable Redlegs coach Neil Balme.

Forward Mark Ducker appeared unlucky not to have been paid a mark 30m from goal and, soon after, James Pyke was penalised for holding the ball after he had been tackled out of bounds by Glenelg wingman Tony Symonds.

Cornes's comments may concern South Australian National Football League directors.

He may be summoned before league commissioner Brian Martin, QC, to explain his remarks if the directors view them as offensive.

Cornes, having reached the finals in seven consecutive years (two elimination finals with South in 1983-84 before winning two premierships with Glenelg in 1985-86 and then two losing grand finals in 1987-88), said Glenelg had done enough to survive yesterday.

"But Norwood did it just that little bit better," he said.

PORTER'S BEST



- 1 — CHRIS MELICAN (G), left:** Was magnificent in ruck, repeatedly giving his smaller teammates the chances to clear. He showed strength and character when it was desperately needed.
- 2 — MICHAEL AISH (N):** After a fair first half, was largely responsible for Norwood's lift in the second and worked hard for every possession.
- 3 — GARRY MCINTOSH (N):** He gave Norwood inspiration with his courage and brilliant teamwork, and never stopped trying.

Will the boys at the Bay retire?

By LEO SCHLINK

Glenelg, jolted by the realisation it has missed its first grand final since 1984, now faces another dilemma — retaining Kym Hodgeman, John Schneebichler, Ross Gibbs and captain Chris McDermott.

Hodgeman, 33, Schneebichler, 31, and Gibbs, 29, are all considering retirement while McDermott, 25, has to decide if he will remain at Brighton or accept a lucrative offer from Victorian Football League club, Brisbane Bears.

Glenelg football director Laurie Rosewarne will hold further talks with the quartet in a bid to preserve the club's core of skilled, experienced players.

"I have talked to 'Hodgey' (Hodgeman) and 'Sneeza' (Schneebichler) is thinking about it. He wants a month to think about it," Rosewarne said.

Hodgeman, the 1978 Magarey Medallist, was a tragic absentee from yesterday's elimination final because of a torn hamstring — the first such injury the rover had suffered in 336 senior matches (236 for Glenelg, nine for South Australia and 91 for North Melbourne).

Schneebichler, a former South Adelaide captain, has not played a league match this season because of crippling back and leg problems. He had cartilage removed from a knee two weeks ago.



Graham Cornes congratulates Neil Balme after the game.

Former Western Australian Gibbs is more likely to retire than either Hodgeman or Schneebichler after just 15 matches this season.

McDermott, a member of the South Australian National Football League's player retention scheme, is one of several players under siege from the big-spending Bears.

Rosewarne said Glenelg's other senior players — vice-captain Scott Salisbury, 31, David Marshall, 29, and Peter Maynard, 29, — would continue in 1990.

Salisbury had signed for next year, and Marshall and Maynard, although yet to sign, were likely to continue.

CENTRAL DISTRICT expects to welcome back centre half-back Craig Braddy for next Sunday's first semi-final against Norwood. Braddy has missed two matches with a groin complaint.

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Ill wind blows for Tony

For just a split second Tony Symonds thought he had sealed it.

As his checkside punt curled toward Football Park's southern goals after 28 minutes of the final term, the Glenelg wingman was preparing to celebrate a dramatic elimination final win.

A goal would have grabbed the Tigers a one-point lead and a berth in next Sunday's first semi-final against Central. But Football Park's notoriously fickle winds quickly dashed those hopes and brought down the curtain on Glenelg's 1989 season.

"For a second I thought it was there," Symonds said later.

"But the wind was swirling everywhere ... the ball couldn't curl against it."

"I was confident of kicking the goal. I couldn't see any leads so I decided to go for it."

While Symonds failed to win the game with his last kick of the match, he will not be held responsible for Glenelg's loss.

His 14 previous kicks and nine handballs created a glut of opportunities for teammates further afield and he ranked highly among the Tigers' best.

Despite other herculean performances from skipper Chris McDermott — in possibly his last appearance for Glenelg — and ruckman Chris Melican, the Tigers could not complete a hat-trick of elimination final wins.

The feeling in the Bay rooms afterwards was obviously one of deep disappointment, but there was also a hint of satisfaction.

Glenelg's 20 players had contributed to arguably the greatest elimination final played since the final five was introduced in 1973.

It was an epic contest. The lead changed 10 times during the match, including six times in the hectic final term.

Although the game was riddled with errors, although it was not a crisp, classy display of Australian Rules, it was a superb struggle between two evenly-matched sides.

Glenelg had control of the game at

Paul Dowling on Glenelg's heartbreak

half-time. It was 21 points clear with Peter Maynard, McDermott and Melican dominating.

While Jim West was losing centre half-forward to Steven Almond the Tigers had other in-form attacking options like Craig Budarick, Darren Mansell and rovers Nick Chigwidden and McDermott.

But despite preparing themselves during the half-time break, the Tigers could not prevent the 'Legs from hauling itself back into the game.

Two goals in a minute from captain Michael Aish set them alight and they stormed to a four-point lead at three-quarter time.

Goals from West, Rod Jameson and Budarick where matched by six-pointers to McIntosh and Ducker (twice) in the final term as Norwood maintained its lead in a thrilling climax.



Tony Symonds is distraught after the Bays' five-point loss. Picture: Chris Mangan

Norwood is still alive ... but only just after surviving the toughest and most bruising South Australian league elimination final by five points against an equally fearless Glenelg at Football Park.

The lead changed for the sixth time in a magnificent, gut-wrenching last quarter when Norwood's Mark Ducker snared a match-saving mark and kicked a goal under extreme pressure 27 secs. into time-on.

Glenelg still had a chance for victory when Tony Symonds was paid a controversial free kick — when Norwood's James Pyke was clearly out-of-bounds and was penalised by John Hyton for holding-the-ball — but kicked out on the full with his crucial shot for goal from a near impossible angle.

This cruel fate sank Glenelg's chances of contesting its fifth successive grand final under coach Graham Cornes's five-year reign.

Norwood must now recover from this gladiator-style contest, which at times threatened to develop into an ugly brawl, and meet Central District in next Sunday's first semi-final.

It wasn't a pretty game — the great finals aren't — and the tenacity and unrelenting attack on the ball kept the 25,239 fans spellbound.

Norwood coach Neil Balme described the final as a "classic contest" and praised players from both sides for their commitment when the tension and the ferocity peaked.

No one was tougher than Norwood's Garry McIntosh and few of the Glenelg players escaped his rugged, often crude, tackles.

But each time, Glenelg maintained its surge and discipline, and Norwood responded in the same inspirational manner when it too felt the brunt of the assaults. Surprisingly, there were no reports.

While McIntosh went on the rampage with his tough tackles on six players within a few minutes in the second quarter, Norwood centreman-half-forward Justin Staritski came out a clear last in the bruising stakes when he was floored by Allen Bartlett in the second term, and crunched even harder by Scott Salisbury early in the third.

Staritski was forced off, but he epitomised the unquestionable character of every player in the game by later returning.

This was, after all, the end of the road for the vanquished. Somehow, it didn't seem right because both Norwood and Glenelg displayed the qualities of a grand finalist. During this showdown, there were ball handling errors and occasionally players passed directly to the opposition.

But they were due to the pressure, rather than their inadequacies, and rarely was either side permitted to have a free run of the ball.

Norwood had first use of the north-westerly breeze, and although it led by eight points at quarter time — guided by two goals from Andrew Pascoe — it appeared to be struggling.

Adding credence to Glenelg's first term was the fact full forward John Fidge, who looked threatening, was forced off with a groin injury.

The signs became more evident in the second quarter, and Balme was forced to make his first significant change when he shifted Matthew Kelly on the ball to quell the effectiveness of Peter Maynard, who was Glenelg's driving force.

While a few key Norwood players began to fade, especially those in the forward lines, Glenelg moved into top gear, and with two goals by Craig Budarick in the dying minutes before half-time, it led by 21 points.

Balme sensed Norwood was in strife, blaming a lack of hard work. Not surprisingly, he made changes which had a tremendous bearing on his team's third-quarter revival. Paul Weston, who was sporting a gashed right eye, sat on the bench, Staritski went to a wing, Wayne Tanner went to centre, Keith Thomas to a back pocket, and Michael Aish went to a forward pocket.

The results were stunning. After five minutes of play, Aish booted two goals



Tony MacTavish leads a group of dejected Tigers from the ground.