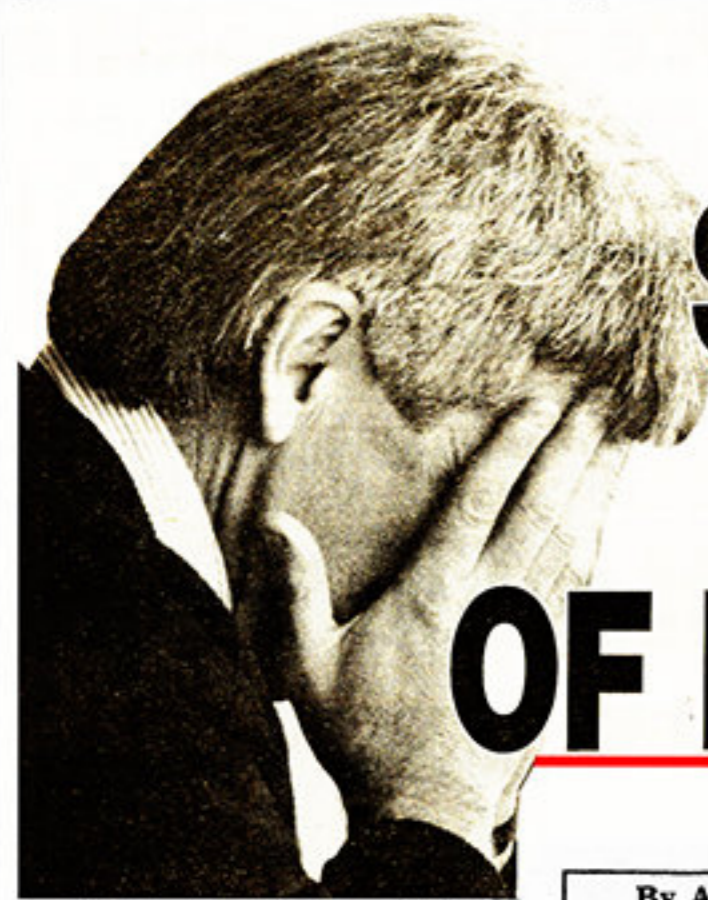


‘The decision was made by the club, but I wasn’t sacked’



Rick Davies during his last game as Sturt coach

SPORT STURT: A DAY OF DRAMA

By Alan Shiell

Sturt Football Club's unprecedented season of turmoil and upheaval continued yesterday when Rick Davies resigned as coach.

Davies, 37, told Sturt players of his shock decision immediately after Glenelg had thrashed them by 132 points in the early match at Football Park.

Later, from his Hawthorn home, he said: "It has been a very disappointing year.

"The decision was made by the club, but I wasn't sacked.

"I resigned after the game. I don't want to go into any details."

He had completed only the first year of a two-year contract as coach of the Blues, who, with only four wins in 22 minor round matches, finished bottom of the league ladder for the first time since 1961.

The inevitable question will arise: Did he go voluntarily or was he pushed?

A Sturt supporter rang me at home early yesterday morning to say Davies had been sacked on Friday night.

Sturt president Guy Lloyd was not available for comment yesterday or last night. He was not at Football Park yesterday, supposedly because of preparations for an overseas trip.

Sturt executive director Ross Tuohy's only comment yesterday was: "Any statement will have to come from the club president."

Sturt players reportedly were stunned by the resignation, although it is known that not all of them supported his continuing.

Sturt has been tearing itself apart since Mervyn Keane was not re-appointed coach for this season, despite Sturt's finishing fifth last season.

The club's off-field problems were amplified by a dissatisfied rebel group of members and climaxed in the recent resignation of Bill Kutchner as president.

Under new president Lloyd, harmony had appeared to be returning — until yesterday.

Davies, Sturt's greatest player — with 317 league games for the Blues and a record seven club champion awards — will forever rue the lack of league-quality players at his disposal as he reflects on an unfortunate record as a league coach, and his second untimely departure from Sturt.

Davies succeeded Don Scott as South Adelaide coach midway through the 1985 season.

South finished eighth that year, then was ninth in 1986 and bottom in '87 before John Reid succeeded Davies last year.

Davies' joining South was prompted by Keane's privately stated decision to drop him to the reserves.

So Davies jumped before he was pushed.

Four years later, under mounting pressure and increasing disloyalty, it seems he has been forced to jump again — a sad, ignominious ending for one of the most colorful and commanding characters and personalities in football and, indeed, all South Australian sport.

The Bays savagely sad Sturt



ALAN SHIELL reports

Glenelg amassed the highest score of the season in crushing bottom team Sturt by 132 points in the early match at Football Park yesterday.

Sturt made a contest of it only until early in the second quarter when it trailed by just three points — 4.7 to Glenelg's 5.4.

Thereafter, Glenelg bolted away to pile on 25.15 to 5.6 to win with overwhelming ease — 30.19 to 9.13.

Glenelg turned on a devastating third-quarter which yielded 12.4 to Sturt's 2.3 and was a massive confidence-booster for the finals.

But as coach Graham Cornes said later, the gloss was taken off the Tigers' huge win by veteran rover Kym Hodgeman's straining his left hamstring. Doctors still gave Hodgeman some chance of playing against Norwood in the elimination final next Sunday, but their optimism was not shared by everyone at Glenelg.

The atmosphere in Sturt's room was all gloom and doom just minutes after Rick Davies' shock resignation as coach.

Davies deserved a better send-off than his players gave him yesterday, even if they were unaware of his intention to stand down — following talks with club officials on Friday night.

Davies may well have faults as a coach, but he also is a victim of not having sufficient players of genuine league quality. This was his experience, first at South Adelaide, then with Sturt.



Merv Keane

Football Park

Glenelg 5.3 12.8 24.12 30.19 (199)
Sturt 3.6 5.9 7.12 9.13 (67)

BEST — GLENELG: McDermott, Maynard, MacTavish, Marshall, Melican, Symonds, West, Donovan. **STURT:** Paynter, Field, Ey, S. Russell.

GOALS — GLENELG: Maynard 6.2, West 5.2, Chigwidden 3.2, Symonds, Marshall 3.1, Hodgeman 3.0, Fidge 2.3, Jameson 2.2, McDermott, Bow, Bartlett 1.1, rushed 0.3. **STURT:** Field 3.4, Welsby, Radbone 2.1, Willmott 1.2, McGlashan 1.0, Lienert 0.2, Russell, Lennon, Veale 0.1.

INJURIES — GLENELG: Hodgeman (strained hamstring) off late in third quarter. **STURT:** McPhee (groin).

UMPIRES — Laurie Argent, Rick Kinnear.

Football Park

Norwood 2.2 3.7 12.14 18.19 (127)
Port 3.7 6.9 8.10 9.13 (67)

BEST — NORWOOD: Payne, Staritski, Thomas, Francis, Pittman, W. Tanner, Warhurst, G. Tanner. **PORT:** Obst, Johnston, Abernethy, S. Williams.

GOALS — NORWOOD: Pascoe 6.3, Ducker 3.1, Ross, G. Tanner 2.1, McIntosh 1.2, Weeding, Thomas 1.1, Staritski, W. Tanner 1.0, Francis 0.2, van der Meer, Payne 0.1, rushed 0.5. **PORT:** D. Smith 3.1, Hynes 2.1, Hodges 2.0, Obst, Tregenza 1.1, Settre, S. Williams, Brown 0.2, R. Boyd 0.1, rushed 0.2.

INJURIES — NORWOOD: Aish (withdrew with back injury). **PORT:** Mahney (withdrew with corked thigh).

UMPIRES — David Elliott, Neville Thorp.

Richmond Oval

West 2.2 5.4 8.8 18.9 (117)
Torrens 1.5 2.10 4.12 6.15 (51)

BEST — WEST: O'Donohue, Twomey, Foott, Fitzsimmons, Fielke, Patterson, Shaw. **TORRENS:** B. Lindsay, Morphett, Chapman, Spiel, Scott Geyer, Harper.

GOALS — WEST: Miller 5.0, Murray 3.0, Fitzsimmons, Fielke 2.1, Bayes, Patterson 2.0, Larkins 1.3, Grosser 1.0, Foott, Edwards, Ward 0.1, rushed 0.1. **TORRENS:** C. Lindsay, Morphett, Harper 1.2, Scott Geyer, Prymke, Edmonds 1.0, Toohey, Neave 0.2, Clarke, Smith, Payze, Steve Geyer 0.1, rushed 0.1.

UMPIRES — Max Cuzzocrea, Michael Abbott.

Elizabeth Oval

Central 5.3 9.6 14.8 21.11 (137)
Woodville 3.1 8.3 10.6 12.11 (83)

BEST — CENTRAL: Smith, Lee, Krieg, Sullivan, Coffee, Schwerdt, Gilbert McAdam, Chaplin, Prior. **WOODVILLE:** Klemm, Schwarz, Fuller.

GOALS — CENTRAL: Mandemaker 6.3, Chaplin 5.0, Gilbert McAdam 2.1, Smith, Robertson 2.0, Roe, Ingerson 1.1, Girdham, Schwerdt 1.0, Sullivan 0.2, Coffee, Jonas, Laird 0.1. **WOODVILLE:** Jakovich 7.3, Grant 2.1, Schwarz, Klemm 1.1, McDonald 1.0, Jolly 0.2, Harper, Haylock 0.1, rushed 0.1.

INJURIES — CENTRAL: Peter Jonas (strained hamstring).

UMPIRES — John Hylton, Graeme Schutz.

Ladder

	W	L	D	F	A	%	Pts
NORTH	19	3	0	2513	1585	61.32	38
PORT	18	4	0	2529	1818	58.18	36
CENTRAL	13	9	0	2156	2187	49.64	26
NORWOOD	12	10	0	2180	1975	52.47	24
GLENELG	12	10	0	2033	2030	50.04	24
Torrens	10	12	0	1879	2189	46.19	20
West	8	14	0	2177	2301	48.62	16
Woodville	8	14	0	1985	2223	47.17	16
South	6	16	0	1796	2352	43.30	12
Sturt	4	18	0	1781	2369	42.92	8

Goalkickers

	Games	Y'day	Total
R. Mandemaker (Central) ...	22	6.3	87.55
A. Jakovich (Woodville) ...	19	7.3	85.61
S. Hodges (Port) ...	21	2.0	68.65
C. Lindsay (Torrens) ...	22	1.2	64.20
J. West (Glenelg) ...	22	5.2	58.28
S. Tasker (North) ...	22	0.2	50.33
D. Stoessel (South) ...	22	7.2	49.34
P. Bennett (North) ...	22	1.0	46.31
P. Harper (Woodville) ...	21	0.1	46.11
M. Ducker (Norwood) ...	16	3.1	40.24
G. McAdam (Central) ...	21	2.1	40.21
A. Pascoe (Norwood) ...	17	6.3	40.19

Adelaide Oval

North 3.3 5.7 14.10 17.16 (118)
South 3.8 7.11 12.11 14.13 (97)

BEST — NORTH: Smart, Simmons, D. Jarman, A. Jarman, Burton, Sanders, Klomp, J. Riley, Clisby. **SOUTH:** Stoessel, Kappler, Whitford, Winton, Smart, Bickley, Butler, Dewhurst, Forbes.

GOALS — NORTH: D. Jarman 4.3, Burton 4.0, Smart 2.1, Lehmann 2.0, Sanders, Redden, Arnold 1.1, Klomp, Bennett 1.0, Stone 0.3, Tasker 0.2, J. Riley 0.1, rushed 0.3. **SOUTH:** Stoessel 7.2, Bickley 3.0, Winton 2.2, White 2.1, Trevena 0.2, McIntyre, Butler, Dewhurst 0.1, rushed 0.3.

INJURIES — NORTH: Redden (slight concussion).

UMPIRES — Graeme Hill, David Trembath.

Crowds

Football Park	27,759
Adelaide	3568
Elizabeth	4410
Richmond	2812
Total	38,549

SA Draw

Saturday: Qualifying final — Port Adelaide v. Central District (Football Park).

Sunday: Elimination final — Norwood v. Glenelg (Football Park).

Footypunt

Game	Winner	Marg.	TAB No	Div
1	Glenelg	91-	20	\$ 5.40
2	Norwood	51-60	6	\$27.20
3	North	21-30	13	\$ 6.70
4	Central	51-60	6	\$ 5.70
5	West	61-70	7	\$14.15

FOOTY TREBLE

Tab Nos. — 6 6 7 — \$14658.80
Winners: Norwood, Central, West.

Only four victories for the season

Sturt, weakened by defections and injuries won only four of its 22 minor round games this season.

It beat South by 30 points at Adelaide Oval in the fifth series, West Adelaide by nine points at Football Park in the eighth series and Norwood twice — by 51 points at Football Park in the 11th series and by 43 points at Adelaide Oval in the 20th series.

Sturt had not finished bottom of the league ladder since 1961.

Since its last grand final appearance in 1983 when it lost to West Adelaide - Sturt has finished seventh (in John Halbert's second year) and fifth, eighth, ninth and fifth under Mervyn Keane and now 10th and last under Davies.

Glenelg owed its 12th win, and its qualifying for the finals for the 17th time in the 21 seasons since and including 1969 (it was sixth in 1971 and '72 and seventh in 1979 and 1983), to an all-in team contribution, yet several players still produced huge efforts.

Captain-rover Chris McDermott was credited with 17 kicks and a colossal 30 handpasses. Peter Maynard had 25 kicks and 10 handpasses, and kicked six goals as a follower. Left-footer Tony MacTavish had 18 kicks and 17 handpasses, exceptional statistics for a back pocket player.

Centreman-cum-wingman David Marshall, ruckman Chris Melican, wingman Tony Symonds, centre half-forward Jim West (five goals) and half-back flanker Mark Donovan were the other major contributors.

Rover John Paynter, half-forward Scott Field, centreman David Ey and wingman Scott Russell were the most conspicuous members of a Sturt side that trailed off alarmingly.

Keane no to Blues' return

Former sacked Sturt coach Merv Keane last night disputed the suggestion he would return to Unley as coach.

Keane, Essendon reserves coach, said: "Rick found himself in an unfortunate situation but I feel he has become another victim.

"As for myself, there's a big ball game at stake for our league and reserves sides tomorrow for a crack at the grand final."

Leading candidates for the Sturt coaching job include former player Robert Klomp, ex-Glenelg champion Peter Carey, former Norwood and Collingwood player Michael Taylor, Bob Hammond, sacked Brisbane Bears coach Peter Knights and perhaps another former VFL coach, Carlton's Robert Walls, who was seen at yesterday's double-header at Football Park.

Graham Cornes said:

"It obviously was a pleasing performance and a good preparation for the next couple of weeks. Unfortunately, Kym Hodgeman's loss took the gloss off it."

RICK DAVIES was not available for comment.