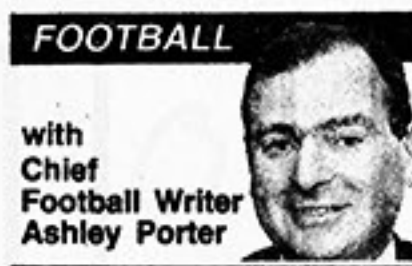


What a classic clash!

Hodges 6, Fidge 6, but Port supreme



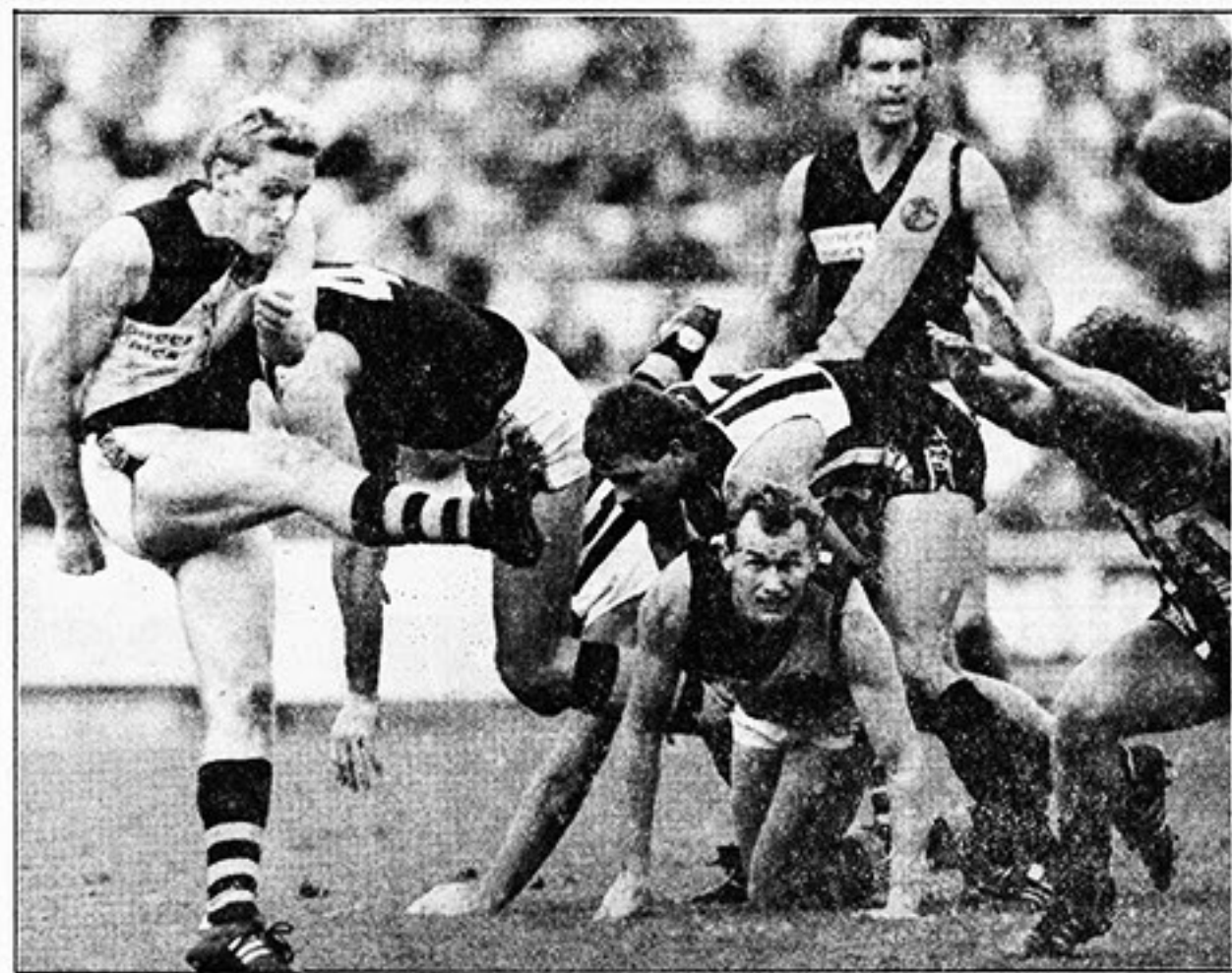
FOOTBALL
with
Chief
Football Writer
Ashley Porter

Port	5.5	9.10	16.12	21.15	(141)
Glenelg	6.2	8.7	16.9	18.13	(121)

SCORERS — Port: Hodges 6.1, R. Smith 2.3, Hutton 2.2, Brown, Hynes, D. Smith, 2.1, S. Williams 2.0, M. Williams, Settre, Tregenza 1.1, Johnston 0.1, rushed 0.2. **Glenelg:** Fidge 6.3, Jameson 2.2, Murphy 2.1, Christie, Maynard 2.0, Hallahan, McDermott, Bartlett, Lamb 1.0, Rouvray, Marshall 0.1, rushed 0.5.

BEST — Port: Hynes, M. Williams, Tregenza, Brown, S. Williams, Foster. **Glenelg:** Jameson, Thompson, Gibbs, McDermott, Maynard, Hallahan.

Umpires: Michael Abbott, Mark Mackie.



BEATING THE STACK ... Tiger Robbie Thompson drives on past Chris Melican, David Hynes, Chris Duthy, John Seeborn and David Brown during the tough contest at Football Park yesterday. Picture: RUSSELL MILLARD

This time the calm came after the storm. Within minutes of loosening Glenelg's grip on top spot with a superb 20-point victory before 24,880 fans at Football Park yesterday, Port Adelaide's change-room was devoid of euphoria.

It seemed as if this lurching football giant, which had delivered its annual warning to the other premiership contenders, wanted to brush aside everything it had just achieved during 120 engrossing minutes of football excellence.

Port had just got within a premiership point of Glenelg, the top spot which it claimed at the completion of the past two seasons. The manner in which the victory was achieved, against magnificent opposition and toughened odds through injuries, hardened the supporters' belief John Cahill's magnificent seventh premiership as a coach was on the line.

But surprisingly, considering the superb challenge Glenelg had just presented, Cahill said: "It was just another win."

Excuse me! No one should get too overawed by one win in the minor round series, but JUST another win?

It was a difficult assessment to digest after watching a game in which the lead changed 16 times, the rival full forwards Scott Hodges and John Fidge each booted six goals to move clear on the league goalkicking list, and the victor, this humble Port, finished the pacy and gruelling battle with only 14 fit men.

Toss in a few spectacular marks, superb goals and, above all, displays of courage by both sides.

Just another win? Nope, it was just another occasion when Port wanted to remain in control of its emotion.

Deep down, Cahill had to be delighted with the performance, but on the surface there had to be signs Port wasn't getting carried away. After all, one swallow doesn't make a summer, even in winter.

While the rewards may have been the same — two premiership points — this win, with South Australian league football at its best, was indeed special.

It had to be special because both sides played so well, including during a sensational third term when Glenelg outscored Port 8.2 to 7.2 during 32 min 53 sec of class footy.

Adding credence to Port's victory was the fact:

State centre half-back Greg Phillips did not resume after half-time because of a corked thigh.

State half-back Bruce Abernethy went off at quarter-time with a bruised foot, but later was forced to go back on.

Back pocket George Fiacchi struggled to run during the second half after aggravating an ankle injury.

Follower Wayne Mahney aggravated his knee injury.

Wingman David Hutton was forced off during the third quarter with a bruised hip, but had to go back on.

Hodges strained an ankle during time-on of the last term.

But above their personal displays of courage (they should be available this Saturday) was the overwhelming factor which made the game great — the magnificent challenge Glenelg provided.

Ultimately, the scoreboard did not give a true indication of the tightness of the match.

Glenelg may have lost the game, but it finished on par with Port's tenacity by repeatedly wiping out two or three-goal deficits until finally Port drew clear in the dying minutes when Port forward Darren Smith,

who earlier in the last term was rested on the bench after having been one of the few players to struggle, kicked two goals.

Both sides preyed upon players who erred because of pressure, rather than a deficiency in ability, and their mistakes cost goals.

There was surely anguish on the Glenelg bench when Fidge accidentally got in the way of a kick from team-mate Michael Murphy, costing a certain goal in the second term. And again in the last when a clear shot for goal should have been taken instead of handpassing.

But heck, it would not have been easy out on the field with so much pressure applied, and overall the mistakes were rare and were largely due to good tackling or defensive work by the opposition. Things which should have been remembered included the superb leading and marking by Hodges and Fidge, who waged a personal battle on the league goalkicking list, the tackle by Port's Stephen Williams on David Marshall which allowed David Brown to take four bounces through the centre of the ground and goal, and the magical mark by Glenelg's Gary Christie in the last term.

There were many other moments of brilliance and frustration for both sides. It was that type of game, a never-ending battle for supremacy.

The test was also presented to the coaches, Cahill and Graham Cornes, who manoeuvred their players to plug gaps and expose each other's team weaknesses on the day.

With Port stricken by injuries, Cahill made noticeable changes at half-time. Geoff Phelps went to centre half-back, Richard Foster to a back pocket, Darren Smith to a forward flank, David Hynes to centre half-forward and Brown and Mahney were switched on to the ball.

The moves were effective, especially the shifting of Hynes. He not only provided genuine support to another top performer in ruckman Russell Johnston, but also finally offered Port a much-needed extra scoring avenue apart from Hodges.

Cornes also shuffled his side, but not as much. Despite losing, the balance generally was there.

Perhaps the best pre-match plan was for Mark Williams to follow Glenelg and State champion rover Chris McDermott, one of the most intelligent and hard-working players in the league, around the ground apart from when the ball went into Port's forward lines.

Williams performed the task extremely well, shading the effectiveness of McDermott, particularly in the centre square, where the going was tough.

Simon Tregenza was outstanding on a wing, Brown produced his usual first-class effort, while Foster, Fiacchi and Northeast were the backbone

of a defence which was forced to work non-stop.

Rod Jameson clearly was Glenelg's best, masterminding the regular fluent attacks from the centre square and constantly proving a thorn in Port's defence.

Half-back Robbie Thompson maintained his excellent State form, while the ageless master of attacking play from the backlines, Ross Gibbs, provided a valuable and entertaining display.

Paul Hallahan certainly justified the confidence the Glenelg selectors had in him by creating his own opportunities on the ball and in the forward lines, and setting up some good team play.

Glenelg ultimately paid a hefty price for a few mistakes moving into attack. There were also times when a direct kick would have been more useful than a handpass to a player under pressure.

But overall, there was little difference between the teams.

Cahill said he was most impressed by the tackling from both sides, adding that this feature made it difficult to get a clear break on the scoreboard.

"I told them at half-time and three-quarter time that the team with the best mental toughness would win," he said.

"They (his players) played a good finals game considering the circumstances. It was tough, both physically and pace-wise.

"Like Glenelg, I think we can still improve on the performance."

Maybe that was the reason the league repeatedly advertised on its electronic scoreboard that grand final tickets would go on sale on September 10. It sure did look like a final, and not "just another win".

Cornes defends full forwards

By LAWRIE MCCAULEY

Glenelg coach Graham Cornes is concerned full forwards are not being properly protected by umpires.

Cornes was given the biggest jeer of the afternoon at Football Park yesterday after speaking to field umpires Michael Abbott and Mark Mackie at the quarter-time break of the game between Glenelg and Port Adelaide.

Despite upsetting Port fans, Cornes is entitled to approach the men in white during the break.

"I was just clarifying their interpretations, that's all," he said soon after Glenelg's 20-point defeat.

"I'm allowed to do that."

When asked what had been his main worry, he said he asked the umpires about "the treatment of our full forward (John Fidge) and the legitimacy or otherwise of that".

Cornes appeared calm and collected as he spoke to the umpires.

The amount of free kicks during the first quarter certainly had favored Port.

The Magpies were paid 11 free kicks while Glenelg received three ... and two of those were free kicks after Port had kicked the ball out of bounds on the full.

Port fans, who booed Cornes from the

field after he had addressed his players at quarter time, became even more irate when a push-in-the-back free was paid to Glenelg wingman Paul Rouvray after just 10 seconds of play in the second term.

Glenelg finished the match with 17 free kicks. Port received 24.

Although Glenelg had one more free kick than Port in the last three quarters, Cornes still had his point about full forwards. He said he was speaking about the treatment to all spearheads and not just Fidge, who stood against Port full back Ben Harris yesterday.

"It seems you can do anything to a full forward and get away with it," he said.

"He should be allowed free movement at the ball without being restricted."

"It should be a straight-out contest for the ball."

The full forwards in both teams excelled yesterday, even though neither was paid a free kick at any stage in the match.

Fidge and Port's Scott Hodges each booted six goals. That was enough for Hodges to retain his lead at the top of the goalkicking list, with 59 goals for the season.

Fidge has kicked 57 and the only other forward threatening for the Ken Farmer Medal for leading goalkicker is Woodville's Allen Jakovich, who has booted 53 goals.



Tiger Jason Bromilow pursues Magpie Rohan Smith yesterday.

Ladder for SA

	W	L	D	F	A	P.c.	Pts
Glenelg	9	2	1	1514	1126	57.35	19
Port	9	3	-	1498	1232	54.87	18
Norwood	8	4	-	1311	1053	55.46	16
North	7	5	-	1169	1019	53.43	14
South	6	6	-	1190	1240	48.97	12
Torrens	6	6	-	1033	1137	47.60	12
West	5	6	1	1192	1358	46.75	11
Central	4	8	-	1186	1351	46.74	8
W'ville	4	8	-	1093	1253	46.59	8
Sturt	1	11	-	1032	1449	41.60	2

Top goalkickers

	Series 12	Total
S. Hodges (Port)	6	59
J. Fidge (Glenelg)	6	57
A. Jakovich (Woodville)	2	53
I. Weeding (Norwood)	1	38
D. Stoeckel (South)	1	37
R. Mandemaker (Central)	4	35
D. Jarman (North)	4	33
S. Ghazi (Central)	4	26
R. Smith (Port)	2	26
L. Schache (Torrens)	4	25

Weekend crowds

Football Park yesterday	24,880
Football Park Saturday (2 games)	7168
Adelaide Oval	4396
Norwood Oval	6999
TOTAL	44,443