

■ An historic era is drawing to a close. Next Saturday's Round 20 series of SANFL matches will mark the end of football as we know it.
 ■ The State's most successful club, Port Adelaide, is hell-bent on joining the Australian Football

League next year as its 15th team — a bombshell that has rocked SA football foundations.
 ■ And now comes news West Torrens and Woodville have been given the green light for the first SA football merger this century —

perhaps the forerunner of other voluntary amalgamations.
 ■ The new name of the club will be Woodville-West/Torrens Football Club Inc — the Eagles — and their colors will be blue, gold and green. The guernsey is yet to be designed.
 ■ It will use Woodville Oval as

its base and home matches will be played at Football Park.
 ■ Members from both clubs will be asked in early October officially to approve the merger, with the SANFL fully supporting the move.
 ■ If it goes ahead, as expected, next week's round will be the last

time the teams will compete — as neither has made the final five.
 ■ Ironically, Woodville and West Torrens are drawn to do battle in the final minor round game of 1990 — on the hallowed turf of Adelaide Oval.
 ■ So this is goodbye ...
 ■ PETER PRIME looks at the history of the two clubs.

1964
1990



1897
1990

WOODVILLE, as with many clubs, has always had a nucleus of top players... but for its legion of diehard fans, it's been a tale of broken dreams.

Admitted to the league in 1964, it has spent an abysmally long time near the depths of the SANFL premiership table.

Yet, under its favorite footballing son, Malcolm Blight, the 1972 Magarey Medallist and the 1978 Brownlow Medallist, Woodville gave every sporting team or participant faith that miracles really could happen.

In the winter of 1979, the club had a brief flirtation with glory when it finished fifth under coach Barry Goodingham, only to finish bottom the next year.

But Blight's return in 1983 after a magnificent career with North Melbourne captured everyone's imagination and heralded an exciting new era — clearly the finest and most memorable time in Woodville's history.

He more than any was instrumental in changing the club's image, both on and off the field.

The Peckers, as they were known then, were replaced by the Warriors, and slowly, surely, Woodville began a fairytale climb.

Sunday, September 21, 1986, probably rates as one of the most exciting in SANFL history when Woodville defeated proud and true Port Adelaide 18.20 to 18.13 in the first semi-final at Football Park in front of 39,066 fans.

The Warriors, everyone's second favorite team, had come from a seemingly hopeless position after the 10th series to enter the preliminary final, only to lose to eventual premier Glenelg by 21 points.

For the first time in the club's history, Woodville was no longer regarded as a pushover. It had earned the respect of all.

Since then, however, the Warriors have again fallen on lean times, apart from grabbing the 1988 Escort Cup premiership under present coach Russell Ebert — their only senior premiership.

As with most clubs, Woodville has lacked depth, although, significantly, it has produced some outstanding players.

None has been better than Malcolm Blight, a football superstar and one of our greatest ever players. Then there was Phil Maylin, a dynamic, courageous wingman who later switched to Carlton where he had a big impact.

John Roberts was a superb, high-flying forward who played with great success for South Melbourne and later West Torrens and North Adelaide, while Ralph Sewer remains a football enigma — still wearing the Woodville jumper at the age of 39.

Bob Simunsen, Rod Allen, Colin MacVicar, John Girardi, Frank Stemper, Ray Huppertz, Lindsay Heaven, Andrew Rogers, Max Parker and Kevin Harris all gave wonderful service to the club, while today, Allen Jakovich and Richard Champion are a duo destined for football greatness.



Simunsen



MacVicar



Sewer



Huppertz



Head



Kingston



Gill



Birt

THE END OF AN ERA

FOUR premierships... an honor roll etched with the names of some of the games greatest players... decades of anxiety, anguish and frustration.

That about sums up the bitter-sweet 93-year history of West Torrens Football Club.

Dark clouds have hung over the Eagles since their last premiership way back in 1953.

Sure, there have been some fleeting moments of respectability, including an Escort Cup night premiership in 1983. But, overall, it's largely been a time of despair.

Some will argue that Torrens inherited problems with the entry of Central District and Woodville into the league competition in 1964, while an unfair boundaries system is also a justified excuse.

But the club's fade from glory over the past 37 seasons is perhaps one of the biggest disappointments to emerge in SA football.

The Eagles last played in the finals in 1980 under Neil Kerley. It finished fifth.

Like Woodville, it has had the nucleus of good players, but it has suffered when injuries have struck.

There have been problems at a management level and a distinct lack of unity, but that's no more.

The Eagles, with president Rex Sellers and general manager Tony Farrugia in control, have adopted a far more professional attitude off field.

Its operation has been streamlined and pre-season the club took an almighty step when it announced it would relocate from its home base of Thebarton Oval to Football Park.

Now, with Andy Bennett at the controls, the club has shown signs of developing into a genuine threat. But time and again it has broken the hearts of its loyal supporters by losing games it should have won.

Over the years, some magnificent footballers have worn the Eagle emblem.

Who can forget two-times Magarey Medallist Bob Hank and the skill and artistry of Lindsay Head, winner of the coveted award in 1955, 1958 and 1963?

Simply, there have been few, if any, better.

Bob Shearman was another brilliant contributor, along with the likes of Geoff Kingston, Glen Pill, John Graham, Kevin McSparran, Peter Phillipou and John Birt to name a few.

Then there was Fred Bills, a valiant performer for the Eagles for many seasons — one of the hardest, toughest combatants the club has seen.

In recent times, Neville Roberts, Jeff Sarua, Matthew Rendell, Dominic Fotia, Steven Stretch and Andrew Payze have all been tremendous players, while present captain Bruce Lindsay rates as one of the club's finest.

Lindsay has been captain of the Eagles since 1984 and is also a former State skipper.

But all too often, it's been left to too few to do too much.



John Girardi



Malcolm Blight



Bob Hank



Bob Shearman

THE HISTORY ...

Founded: 1938 (entered league 1964)
 Colors: Green and gold
 Emblem: Warriors
 Chairman: Bill Sanders
 President: Kevin Angel
 General manager: Geoff Hosking
 Coach: Russell Ebert
 Captain: Romano Negrí
 Vice-captain: Peter Schwarz
 Premierships: Nil
 Grand finals: Nil
 Finals: 1979, 1986-7
 Wooden spoons: Nine — 1965, 1967, 1971, 1980-5
 Other premierships: 1988 Escort Cup
 Most years as coach: Five — Malcolm Blight 1983-7
 Most years as captain: Three — Peter Obst 1965-7; Noel Teasdale 1968-70; John Girardi 1975-77, Malcolm Blight 1983-85, Max Parker 1982, 1986-7
 Most games: 321 — Ralph Sewer

1969-80 and 1984-89. He also played 57 for Glenelg and 12 for South Australia
 Most State games: Ralph Sewer 12
 Interstate captains: Malcolm Blight 1985
 Magarey Medallists: Malcolm Blight 1972
 Ken Farmer Medallists: Malcolm Blight 1985; Stephen Nichols 1986, 1988
 All-Australians: Malcolm Blight 1972 and 1985; John Roberts 1980 (while playing with South Melbourne); Andrew Rogers 1987
 Most goals in a match: 16 by John Roberts v Central at Football Park on July 2, 1977
 Most goals in a season: 126 by Malcolm Blight in 1985. Others: 104 by Trevor Pierson in 1982; 103 by Stephen Nichols in 1986 and 1988
 Highest goals aggregate: Ralph Sewer 1969-80 and 1984-90
 Best home attendance: 11,026 v Port on August 9, 1986, at Woodville
 Best finals attendance: 39,066 v Port in 1986 first semi-final at Football Park



Heaven



Birt



Parker



Bills

THE HISTORY ...

Founded: 1897. Colors: Blue and Gold. Emblem: Eagle
 President: Rex Sellers; General Manager: Tony Farrugia; Coach: Andy Bennett; Captain: Bruce Lindsay; Vice-captain: Andrew Payze
 Premierships: Four — 1924, 1933, 1945, 1953
 Grand finals: Eight — 1924-5, 1933, 1939, 1945, 1948-9, 1953
 Wooden spoons: Five — 1930, 1941, 1975-6, 1986
 Other premierships: 1983 Escort Cup
 Most years as coach: Five — A. "Joe" Kirlough 1952-6. Most years as captain: Nine — Bob Hank 1947-55
 Most games: 327 — Lindsay Head 1952-70
 Interstate captains: Ralph Aldersey 1905, 1908; Francis "Roy" Brown 1924; S. "Max" Pontifex 1934; R.W. "Bob" Hank 1947-9, 1951-4; Lindsay Head 1960; Bob Shearman 1962-4; Bruce Lindsay 1987
 Magarey Medallists: Tom MacKenzie 1902; David Low 1912; S. "Max" Pontifex 1932; R.W. "Bob"

Hank" 1946-7; Lindsay Head 1955, 1958, 1963.
 Simpson Medallists: Bob Shearman 1964
 All-Australians: Bob Hank 1953; Lindsay Head 1956; Geoff Kingston 1961; Bob Shearman 1961; Matt Rendell 1983, 1987 (both while playing with Fitzroy)
 Most goals in a match: 12 by Mick Clingly v Glenelg at Thebarton on August 25, 1956 and 12 by Brian Mulvihill v Woodville at Adelaide on May 13, 1967
 Most goals in a season: 85 by John Willis in 1952
 Highest goals aggregate: 524 by Lindsay Head, 1952-70
 Best home attendance: 20,832 v Norwood at Thebarton on May 26, 1962
 Best finals attendance: 47,755 v Norwood, 1948 grand final at Adelaide Oval
 Last premiership side: 1953 — Torrens 9.13 d. Port 8.12. The side — F: R. Hank, J. Willis, D. Prior. HF: L. Head, W.D. Cockshell, W. Hank, C: W.J. Carr, Bob Hank, E. Lodge, HB: R. Sulley, R. Ashby, F. Graham, B: K. Thiele, A. Roberts, M. Clingly. Rucks: E.J. Coverlid, C. Pyatt, J. Bradford. Reserves: R. Kutcher, G. Downey. Coach: Joe Kirlough.