



SANFL PRELIMINARY FINAL

Eagles fold under pressure

Grand final dream left in tatters by tough Tigers

By LAWRIE MCCAULEY

A loser's mentality among the Eagles, coupled with the fierce resolve and class of Glenelg, produced a lop-sided SANFL preliminary final at Football Park yesterday.

Glenelg romped home by 64 points, 19.12 to 9.8, to set up a grand final showdown with minor premier Port Adelaide this Saturday.

The Eagles kept pace with Glenelg for the first half, when they withstood most of the pressure — but a dismal second half fadeout saw Glenelg boot 13.6 to a pathetic 4.3.

While Glenelg players are left with a mission, that of battling Port for the flag, the Eagles are again left to ponder why they can not mix it with the best in finals.

Coach Neil Balme, who has seen his side lose four of five finals matches in its two-year existence, wasn't about to brand his players as having "a loser's mentality" but he didn't fall far short.

He responded to a question along those lines by saying: "Certainly when the pressure was on in the last two games, that's the way we played and we just haven't played with the confidence and composure that we showed during the year."

"It's bitterly disappointing from my point of view."

"I really don't know what it is. Maybe just being around about is enough for some of them."

But the Eagles were about the mark last year and bombed out with successive finals losses to North and West. What can be learned now that wasn't evident last year?

"I don't know, I can't tell you," said Balme soon after yesterday's humiliating loss.

"I've had half an hour to think about this. Two hours ago I thought we had a pretty good side."

If the Eagles had a pretty good side, then Glenelg must have fielded a team of superstars. The Bays certainly made their victory look easy.

Full forward John Fidge booted 11.4 ... which stacks up well compared to the team total of 9.8 from the opposition.

He was tremendous in the air (10 marks) and used his hulking

frame to great advantage when the ball came to ground against opponents of the quality of Paul Bulluss, Wayne Weidemann and Scott Morphet.

No-one had an answer to curb Fidge.

But, more importantly, no-one had an answer to stop Glenelg getting plenty of the ball across half-back and across the middle, so they could run it into Fidge with such precision and confidence.

Darren Mansell again was superb as a ruck rover, dictating play and setting up a host of opportunities with his 22 kicks and 10 handballs.

Paul Hallahan was another who just kept on getting the ball and using it with poise and polish.

But what helps make Glenelg so hard to beat in these tough finals is its half-back line of Andrew McKay, John Seeborn and Mark Viska.

None put a foot wrong yesterday and they combined brilliantly to provide a feast of opportunities for their teammates further afield.

And full back Paul Rouvray was magnificent in the way he extinguished any threat David Niemann may have posed close to Eagles' goal.

Rouvray now must prepare for the task of his playing career — meeting Scott Hodgson in an individual battle that may well determine the fate of his side in the grand final.

While it may be said Glenelg relies heavily on the performances of Fidge, Clayton Lamb gave everyone a reminder that Glenelg is not a one-man band close to goal, chipping in with four goals yesterday, although he did kick the team's last three goals of the match.

The Bays had many other good contributors including Allan Bartlett, who rucked well when he came onto the ground in the third term, centreman David Marshall, who helped fire the second half destruction, and wingmen Lynden Bow and Grant Reubenicht.

The Eagles had few who even looked in the same league as their opposite numbers.

Stuart Nicol, Robert Pyman and Andrew Payze battled and looked as if they wanted to make a game of it.

For that they deserve credit.



BAYS ON THE BOIL ... Glenelg defender Robbie Thompson fires out a handball despite a diving tackle from the Eagles' Mark Hannam at Football Park yesterday. Picture: MARK BRAKE.

GLENELG	3.2	6.6	10.10	19.12	(126)
EAGLES	4.3	5.5	6.6	9.8	(62)
SCORERS — Glenelg: Fidge 11.4, Lamb 4.2, Reubenicht 2.0, Hallahan, Murphy 1.0, Russell 0.3, Mansell 0.2, Salisbury 0.1. Eagles: Taylor 2.2, Phillipou, Payze 2.0, Niemann 1.1, Nicol, M. Hannam 1.0, Pesch, Totham, Schwarz 0.1, rushed 0.2.					
BEST — Glenelg: Fidge, Mansell, Rouvray, Hallahan, McKay, Seeborn, Viska, Hallahan, Bow. Eagles: Nicol, Pyman, Payze.					
INJURIES — Eagles: Neave (calf).					
UMPIRES — Michael Abbott, Kevin Chambers.					
CROWD — 19,256.					

But few others gave the appearance of being up to the contest.

"We didn't do a lot early but we were still in it at half-time without doing much," said Balme.

"The third quarter was when we fumbled and mucked around. We fumbled five times in the first four minutes. We lost it in that third quarter. We just couldn't keep the ball in our forward line."

"But, even then, after playing probably the worst quarter we played all year, we were still within five goals — but in the last quarter we couldn't give a yelp."

Statistically, not much separated the sides.

Glenelg had 197 kicks to 172, 69 marks to 54 and 128 handballs to 119.

But it was the way Glenelg players used the ball that made

such a telling difference on the scoreboard.

The run out of the backline got things going, the midfielders helped gather momentum and Fidge finished it off.

Everything ran smoothly for the Bays. They couldn't have asked for a better build-up for their grand final showdown.

With the Eagles' grand finals dreams in tatters, it remains to be seen what lessons can be learned — and who will attempt to put the lessons into effect.

Balme wasn't about to shed any light on speculation he remains a candidate for the vacant Melbourne coaching job next season.

"I'm just suffering this loss, that's all I'm doing right now," he said.

When pressed about whether he could give a commitment to being coach of the Eagles in 1993, he replied: "I'm saying nothing."

Tigers' time: Hodgeman

● From Page 39

"Port has been arrogant I suppose and has intimidated Glenelg for quite a number of years."

"It's about time Glenelg changed that situation. Port should be red-hot favorites. They've been the most outstanding team of the year, but you never know what's going to happen in a grand final."

Hodgeman said before the start of the finals that, as long as it kept winning, the extended finals campaign might work in Glenelg's favor as it gave the side longer to find the perfect team balance and for the late additions (from injury and the Crows) to settle back into the side.

"It's going to plan now," he

said. "I thought if we played to our maximum today we'd be cherry ripe for the grand final. The players have got to believe that now."

"They played very well today and they've got to believe they can beat Port Adelaide next week. If they don't believe that, they won't win."

"It's worked out very well so far but we've only gone 75 per cent of the way."

"The toughest 25 per cent is still to come."

"That's what we've got to understand. It's not going to be easy."

Something else that won't be easy is settling on a combination of 20 players to represent the club in what it hopes is a history-making grand final.

Glenelg had a feast of good players in the reserves, and that will maintain pressure on every player to win his spot in the team.

Certainly no-one was admitting to having any injuries after yesterday's game.

"They're not going to tell me anyway," said Hodgeman.

"I'll have to find out on the track."

"The coach has got to make sure everybody is fit and right for the grand final, but I believe everyone got through the game pretty well — which will make it very difficult at selection, especially when you look at Rod Jameson, Jim West and Craig Budarick who did very well (in the reserves)."

"It's going to be a very difficult choice as to who we pick."

Fidge hits back to spearhead Glenelg premiership charge

By LEO SCHLINK

Abjectly depressed in the depths of winter by a foot injury that simply refused to heal, frustrated John Fidge resolved to sit out the rest of the season.

His contribution to the Glenelg cause was, at the time, embarrassingly minimal.

Two early-season matches, interrupted by an elbow complaint, had yielded just six goals.

Having decided enough was, indeed, enough, Fidge consulted Kym Hodgeman to reveal his intentions.

The coach, to put it mildly, was not amused.

"We exchanged some harsh words," Hodgeman recalled yesterday.

"John was injured, he had a few other problems in his life and he wasn't really focused on his football."

"But he has a passion about playing for Glenelg, we share a mutual respect and we worked things out."

"His performance today was obviously fantastic but, if you talk to him now, he probably has already forgotten it."

Unsurprisingly, Fidge still had more than vague recall of his contest-shattering, 11-goal domination of the Eagles at Football Park yesterday.

But, tellingly, smug self aggrandisement was nowhere to be found. Yes, Fidge agreed, it was a "personally satisfying effort."

But nothing more — apart from the most lavish praise of his team-mates. "You have to be able to put everything in perspective," Fidge said in his quiet tone.

"Our half-back line was sensational. I think 11 goals, in the end, flattered me a bit."

"I was on the end of some very good play, which made it a lot easier for me. The backline deserves a lot of credit for what happened today."

A cluster of beaming supporters in the Tigers' lair last night was willing to apportion significantly more of the emphatic preliminary final success to Fidge, who tormented three opponents — Paul Bulluss, Wayne Weidemann and Scott Morphet.

Few, however, could claim to have forseen Fidge's contribution during his April 18-July 11 absence, when Glenelg rarely was able to fulfil its pre-season promise.

Fidge was of a similar view.

"I was going to give it away for the season," he said.

"I couldn't get over the injury and I went to Kym about it. He told me to keep persevering. So I did."

"I wanted then just to be a good contributor for Glenelg in the finals; a good finals player."

"Since then, it seems to have worked out."

A total of 74 goals in 11 matches is ample indication of Fidge's importance to the Bays and their premiership aspirations.

When the match was in the balance yesterday, it was Fidge who shoved it in Glenelg's direction.

He collected three goals in the first term, one in the second, three in the third and four in the last quarter and, in tandem with Clayton Lamb, guaranteed Glenelg would reach its eighth grand final in 12 seasons.

Fittingly, the preliminary final marked Fidge's 50th appearance in the Tiger guernsey.

The half century has produced 247 goals at an astonishing average of almost five goals a match.

True to form, Fidge, and his deadly serious colleagues, had little more in mind last night than toppling Port Adelaide in the grand final on Saturday.

"I think we've got the team to do it," he said.

"Our backline is much harder, more physical than it was in 1990 (when Port triumphed by 15 points) and our forward line is always dangerous."

"I think we can do well."

Fidge's confidence was echoed by Hodgeman, who has endured a rollercoaster season.

The former rover might derive more pleasure from a premiership than would be otherwise obvious following one of the most difficult years in his celebrated career.

And, if so, nobody ought to be more pleased for him than Fidge.

The former Melbourne and Brisbane spearhead has been part of the team evolution that has gathered pace under Hodgeman's direction, to such an extent, in fact, that the momentum is squarely behind Glenelg.

Hodgeman's post-match declaration that his club would impose a media ban — on all except himself and captain Scott Salisbury — was sign enough of his resolve.

Muzzling of players has been shown to be a flawed practice in recent days — e.g. Geelong — but, then again, Hodgeman has come to appreciate the highs of living dangerously.



Under 19 grand final

At Football Park

GLENELG	4.5	8.6	13.8	15.12	(102)
Norwood	3.2	8.7	10.8	12.8	(80)

BEST — GLENELG: Roehrich, Ridgeway, McNamara, Smith, Oxley, Berbakov, Dittmar, Ellis, Smelt. NORWOOD: Cormie, Nicholson, Battams, Prisk, Williams, Sostaric.

GOALS — GLENELG: Smith 8, McDonald, Goodridge 2, Exelby, McNamara, Smelt. NORWOOD: A. Betterman 3, Thomas, Chapman 2, Porritt, Cormie, Woollee, Nicholson, D. Betterman.

PRELIMINARY FINAL STATISTICS

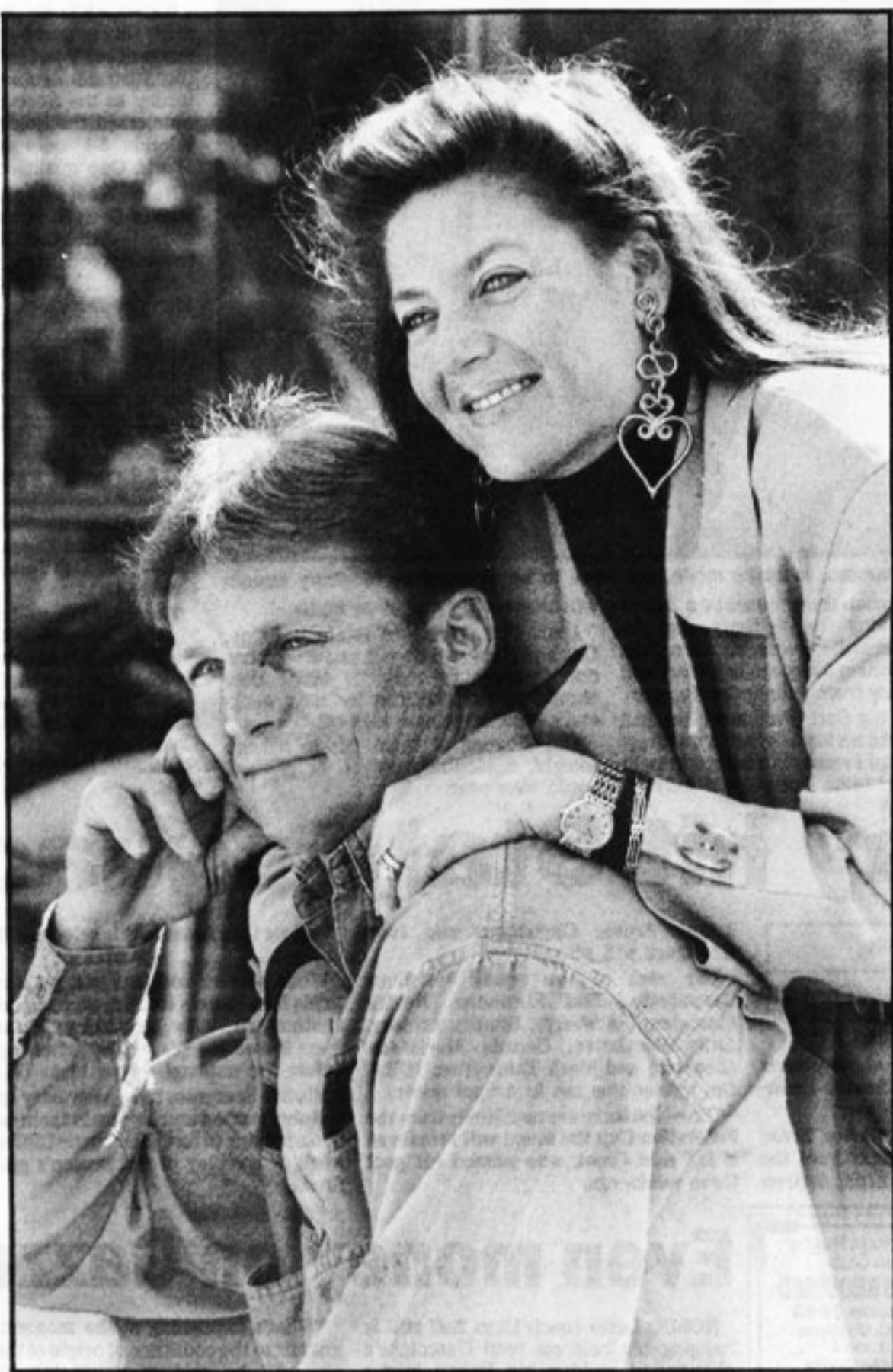
Glenelg	Kicks				Marks				Handballs				Frees				Scores		Hit Ticks	
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	F	A	G	B	out			
RUSSELL	1	3	3	2	9	2	1	1	1	5	1	—	—	3	4	1	5	—	3	1
FIDGE	3	3	5	5	16	2	2	4	2	10	—	—	—	—	2	1	3	11	4	—
HALLAHAN	2	7	5	3	17	—	—	2	—	2	4	3	1	2	10	—	—	1	—	—
LAMB	2	2	2	6	12	1	—	2	3	6	3	3	1	1	8	—	—	4	2	1
MURPHY	2	2	1	2	7	1	1	1	1	4	1	2	1	—	4	1	2	1	—	3
REUBENICHT	3	4	2	1	10	1	2	—	1	4	1	2	1	5	9	1	1	2	—	—
BOW	3	5	3	3	14	—	—	—	—	2	3	2	3	4	12	1	2	—	—	2
MARSHALL	3	3	6	6	18	1	—	4	2	7	3	4	1	2	10	3	1	—	—	3
KRETSCHMER	—	—	1	1	2	—	—	1	—	1	—	1	2	3	1	—	—	—	—	—
VISKA	2	2	3	3	10	1	1	—	1	3	1	1	5	1	8	—	—	—	—	3
SEEBORN	1	4	2	3	10	—	—	2	1	3	—	1	2	—	3	1	2	—	—	1
McKAY	6	—	1	4	11	4	—	—	—	4	1	3	1	1	6	—	—	—	—	1
DUTHY	1	1	3	—	5	—	—	2	1	3	2	—	1	1	4	1	—	—	—	1
ROUVRAY	2	2	2	2	8	1	—	2	1	4	5	—	3	1	9	—	—	—	—	1
THOMPSON	—	1	3	4	8	—	—	—	2	2	1	3	—	1	5	3	1	—	—	1
CHRISTIE	1	—	2	—	3	—	—	1	—	1	3	—	1	—	4	2	1	—	—	13
MANSELL	4	2	9	7	22	—	1	1	2	4	3	2	3	2	10	1	—	—	—	2
CHIGWIDEN	1	3	2	1	7	—	—	1	—	1	4	1	3	3	11	1	1	—	—	4
SALISBURY	1	—	—	3	4	—	—	—	1	1	1	—	1	—	2	—	3	1	—	2
BARTLETT	—	—	1	3	4	—	—	1	1	2	—	2	2	4	—	—	2	—	—	8
TOTALS	38	44	56	59	197	14	12	24	19	69	37	27	32	32	128	18	28	19	12	28

FREES				PENALTIES		GOALS				DIST. OF GOALS			
BACKS	CENT.	FOR	TOTAL	50 M	GOALS	FREE	PLAY	MARK	TOTAL	0-15	15-30	30-40	40+
9	5	4	18			1	9	9	19	3	6	7	4

Eagles	Kicks				Marks				Handballs				Frees				Scores		Hit Ticks	
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	F	A	G	B	out			
NIEMANN	2	1	1	2	6	1	—	—	1	2	—	—	1	1	2	—	1	1	7	—
TAYLOR	3	3	3	2	11	2	3	2	1	8	3	1	—	2	6	—	1	2	2	1
PESCH	2	2	—	3	7	1	—	—	1	2	5	2	3	2	12	—	—	1	—	1
NEAVE	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
PHILLIPOU	4	1	2	—	7	2	1	—	—	3	—	1	—	—	1	1	1	2	—	1

Preliminary Final, 1992

Bay skipper's magnificent obsession



Family support ... Glenelg captain Scott Salisbury with his new wife Michel on the eve of the big match. Picture: Neon Martin

SCOTT'S DREAM OF FAREWELL FLAG

By
PETER PRIME

Tough, courageous Glenelg captain Scott Salisbury will end a magnificent nine-year career with the Tigers at the end of the season.

But a dream, bordering on an obsession, remains for the gritty, valiant utility — to hold aloft the premiership cup on grand final day next Saturday.

For the moment Salisbury's eyes are purely focussed on today's sudden-death preliminary final clash against the Eagles at Football Park from 2.20pm. Nothing else matters.

A veteran of 238 league and seven State games and a former All-Australian, the 34-year-old says his heart is willing to continue next winter. Sadly, his body, permanently bruised and battered, is not.

Victory today and it's a shot at Port Adelaide for the 1992 SANFL premiership crown. Lose and it's the end of the road for one of the State's most colorful characters. "It's just getting too hard now," a reflective Salisbury said from his beautifully renovated Glenelg East home.

"I never really used to tear muscles, but now all the little things are going on me. They're not major things, but just enough to make me miss a game.

"I'd play again next year if I could. But if I had a rest and did the pre-season again, four or five games into the season something else probably

Match program

10.30am: Car parks open
11am: Gates open
11.35am: Reserves preliminary final — Port v Glenelg
2.20pm: League preliminary final — Eagles v Glenelg

would go wrong. It would be great to go out on a grand final win. That's what I want."

Salisbury, who runs his own company, S.J. Salisbury Constructions, married Michel five weeks ago. He and his wife almost certainly will holiday overseas next year.

"I also have a fishing trip to Darwin organised, I'll get stuck into work and perhaps think about starting a family," he said.

One of the most inspirational players in the SANFL, Salisbury has few, if any regrets. "I wouldn't have minded playing in the AFL.

"I probably regret the Crows didn't start up five years ago, but then I don't know if I would have made it anyway.

"When I first started out and played my first game I thought, 'well that's good. At least I've played one'.

"After that I thought I at least had to play 10. I just kept on going."

Salisbury says the Tigers are well

prepared for today's preliminary final.

"There's probably not as much hype around the club as in previous years.

"We're fairly confident about it without being over-confident. We should have a good chance but these games now are just on the day," he said.

Glenelg again will be without Adelaide Crow star Rod Jameson for today's battle. Jameson, who has been battling a virus and has lost a lot of weight, could not be considered.

Both teams have an imposing look about them as they ready themselves for the enormity of the task.

During the past week Eagles coach Neil Balme has faced a true test of his widely-lauded coaching ability in trying to re-focus his team after its second semi-final loss to Port Adelaide.

But they have acquitted themselves admirably this season. It is pure folly to write them off, especially with a potent forward line of the likes of David Niemann, Andrew Taylor and young Sam Phillipou.

Further, the Eagles have the score on the board in their minor-round clashes against Glenelg, winning by 27 points in the second round and by 36 points in round 20 — both at Football Park.

Glenelg won the round 11 match-up at Glenelg — 20.14 to 13.16.

"It should be a very good contest," Eagles skipper Peter Schwarz said.

"Glenelg is playing pretty well at the moment, too, and has a lot of talent in its side. We're looking forward to a very good game."

Back for the Eagles today are strongman Wayne Weidemann and forward Simon Neave — both recovering from injury.

Glenelg just won't lie down.

Some were foolish enough to write it off not long ago, but Kym Hodgeman and his men have proved to be a calculating and highly proficient football outfit.

They have a very real opportunity of playing in their 14th grand final in 24 years against Port — a super record.

After the disappointments of last year when the club finished sixth, Hodgey wanted his players to hurt — and they did.

After stewing all summer they are set to plunge a knife into the Eagles' breast and extract more than their pound of flesh with another grand final appearance.

Tiger defender Chris Duthy will play his 200th game today, while Eagles' backman Steve Geyer turns 30.

