

Blues closer to ending finals exile

By DAVID BURTENSHAW
Sturt, anchored to the bottom of the SANFL premier-ship table for the past eight seasons, is poised to play in its first finals series since 1988.

The decade of despair finally appears over for the Double Blues, who were on the brink of extinction until a bold rescue plan united long-suffering supporters before the 1996 season. Fifth-placed Sturt's stunning 26-point win over Central District at Adelaide Oval on Saturday prised open a three premiership point-break over chief rival West Adelaide, which lost to ladder leader Norwood after holding a narrow half-time advantage. "We've been around the mark all season but to beat a top three side was a feather in our cap," delighted Sturt coach Phil Carman said after Saturday's upset. "It's something we haven't been able to do often and should give the players plenty of confidence for the rest of the season."

Sturt, which won seven premierships between 1966-76, has not played in the finals since 1988 when it finished fifth under Merv Keane. That was Keane's last season as coach — and Sturt has since

SANFL PREMIERSHIP TABLE

	LIVING HEALTH CUP SEASON				P.c.	Pts	
	W	L	D	F			
Norwood	13	2	1	1536	856	64.21	26
Port	11	3	1	1303	1159	52.92	23
Central	10	5	1	1577	1080	59.35	20
North	8	5	1	1215	1075	53.06	17
Sturt	6	7	2	1138	1266	47.34	14
West	5	9	1	1184	1249	48.66	11
Glenelg	4	10	1	1070	1621	39.76	9
South	3	10	2	1015	1409	41.87	8
Eagles	3	12	1	1074	1397	43.46	6

THIS WEEK'S DRAW
Round 18 — Saturday: Sturt v South (Adelaide), Central v West (Elizabeth), Eagles v North (Woodville), Glenelg v Norwood (Glenelg). Bye: Port.

claimed eight consecutive wooden-spoons under the leadership of Rick Davies (1989), Kevin Higgins (1990), Steven Trigg (91-92), Haydn Bunton (93-94) and Carman.

The Double Blues did not win a game in Carman's first season — prompting the search for a merger partner — and then won just four games last year after a promising start.

Sturt, with six wins and two draws from 15 outings, plays South Adelaide, Port Adelaide, North Adelaide, Glenelg and West over the rest of the minor round. West (five wins, one draw),

faces Central, North, the Eagles, Glenelg and Sturt but coach Michael Taylor will not concede his side is out of the race. "It's not all lost — there are five games to go and anything can happen in five games. Who knows? Sturt might lose against Glenelg. And we do play Sturt in the last minor round."

Sturt's win also has added life to the fight for top three rankings. Norwood appears to have the minor premiership in control but Central and, to a far lesser extent Port, are under pressure from North.

Glenelg's slim finals hopes faded even further yesterday when it lost to South by 23 points at Noarlunga Oval.

Determined Applegarth calls for more consistency

Panthers find hope for future

By DOUG ROBERTSON

A solid performance lifted South Adelaide from the bottom of the SANFL ladder and reignited hope for the future with a 23-point victory over a wasteful Glenelg at Noarlunga Oval yesterday.

South's 14.12 (96) was its highest score this season, denying Glenelg — 11.7 (73) — after the Tigers looked to have a genuine opportunity to over-run the home side and revive their dim finals hopes.

Glenelg turned for home trailing by 28 points, with the boost of a five-goal wind. But the sloppy Tigers self-destructed with poor ball skills and a drop in intensity to remain languishing in seventh spot, five premiership points outside the five with five games to play.

Lack of a strong-marking forward and South's cool-headed defence restricted Glenelg all day but was especially costly when the Tigers kicked with the wind. Glenelg took 10 marks in the second term and just seven in the last while South's backlines, headed by Duncan Draper, Ashley Fernee and Kym Cobb, repeatedly intercepted the Tigers' ill-directed forward bombardment.

Ruckman Simon Crawshay, who battled hard against a competitive Luke Ottens, regularly dropped deep into defence to further press South's aerial dominance. Crawshay felt the sting of coach Ken Applegarth's determination by being benched for most of the third quarter for "not following instructions".

Powerful Panther half-forward Jason McCartney (1.1), slippery goalsneak Julian Farkas (5.1), and David Stoeckel (3.1) were willing targets for South's hard-running on-balls. When the Panthers' forward beacons did not dictate proceedings Gary Cameron, Nathan Genovese — in an unusual role on a wing — rookie centremen Tony Crennan or follower Luke Norman chipped in.

Apart from a worrying lapse in the third

term, South maintained a vigorous attack on body and ball to force crucial turnovers. South has yet to win consecutive games this season something the demanding Applegarth impressed on his players.

"I displayed not many congratulatory things after the game, it was more a bollocking," he said. "A number of occasions this year we've let the club down badly after a strong effort like this and I can't accept anything but that... it's been the consistency of our inconsistency that's worrying me. We'll keep changing things around to find the right mix and we'll keep going until we get it right."

"I thought it was a bit different (yesterday) with Crennan in the centre and his competition was terrific — we didn't have that last week — and having a class forward like Farkas made a big difference."

Glenelg looked dangerous in an attacking third term into the wind when Ottens, Nick Chigwidden, Dwaine Kretschmer and Mark Viska lifted, and Alistair Burke continued strongly.

Thirteen-game rookie Michael Raidis effectively tagged John Polkinghorne out of the game for three quarters and John Rombotis (4.0) and Leigh Tudor (3.1), who came in as a late replacement for Josh Contin, provided headaches for South.

Glenelg came within 15 points when Grant Reubenicht goaled almost 20 minutes into the final term but its blundering style soon sabotaged its ambitions, leaving coach Wayne Stringer angry.

"Simple turnovers cost us a game of footy and until we clean that up we're never going to be a force," he said. "We ran the footy in the third quarter and didn't turn it over then but just blasted it in, in the last quarter."

"We've just got to keep finding the right blokes we want to persevere with next year. We may look at two or three new ones and start rebuilding for next year. We'll just reward the boys who want to stand up and have a go."

	Kicks				Marks				Handballs				Frees				Scores	Hit	Tackles		
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4				F	A
J.FARKAS	2	3	1	4	10	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	5	1	0	2
P.KEAM	1	1	0	1	3	1	0	0	1	2	2	1	0	1	4	1	0	1	1	0	0
D.STOECKEL	2	0	2	0	4	1	0	1	0	2	1	2	1	1	5	1	1	3	1	3	1
T.MILLS	2	4	1	3	10	0	2	0	2	4	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	1	2	0	2
J.MCCARTNEY	5	4	1	1	11	3	3	1	1	8	1	0	2	2	5	0	1	1	1	1	0
L.NORMAN	2	4	2	4	12	0	0	0	2	2	1	6	2	0	9	2	2	1	0	0	3
N.GENOVESE	2	5	2	4	13	0	1	0	3	4	1	1	2	1	5	1	6	0	1	0	2
T.CRENNAN	0	2	0	1	3	0	1	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	8	0	1	0	0	0	1
P.MURTON	5	2	1	0	8	0	2	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1
G.OSBORN	0	4	1	3	8	0	0	0	2	2	1	2	0	1	4	1	0	0	0	0	0
A.FERNEE	4	1	2	2	9	2	1	1	0	4	0	1	1	2	4	2	0	0	1	2	2
K.COBB	2	2	2	0	6	3	2	0	0	5	1	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0
S.WEBB	0	2	0	1	3	0	1	0	1	2	1	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
D.DRAPER	2	3	2	0	7	0	1	3	0	4	0	3	1	0	4	0	0	0	0	1	0
M.HARWOOD	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	3	0	0	0	0
S.CRAWSHAY	3	5	0	2	10	1	2	0	2	5	1	0	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	11	2
J.POLKINGHORNE	1	1	4	8	14	0	0	0	2	2	4	3	0	2	9	1	1	0	0	0	4
G.CAMERON	2	2	2	6	12	0	3	0	0	3	1	5	1	1	8	3	0	2	1	0	2
P.JOHNSON	0	0	2	1	3	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
M.JOHNSTON	0	3	3	1	7	0	1	2	0	3	0	1	0	2	3	0	2	0	0	0	2
D.TALBOT	0	0	1	3	4	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	2	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	35	49	29	45	158	11	21	10	18	60	18	31	17	20	86	15	19	14	12	19	24

	Kicks				Marks				Handballs				Frees				Scores	Hit	Tackles		
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4				F	A
A.MCLEAN	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
B.OTTENS	2	0	1	0	3	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	9
L.TUDOR	0	3	3	2	8	0	1	2	0	3	0	0	2	1	3	0	1	3	0	0	1
J.ROMBOTIS	1	3	5	6	15	1	2	1	1	5	3	0	4	1	8	2	1	4	0	0	2
A.BARTLETT	2	1	4	0	7	0	0	3	1	4	0	2	3	1	6	0	1	0	0	1	0
J.SCRIPPS	3	0	5	2	10	1	0	1	0	2	1	1	1	1	4	2	0	1	0	1	0
A.ROWETT	0	1	1	2	4	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	1
G.REUBENICHT	0	1	3	3	7	0	0	1	0	1	2	2	1	2	7	0	2	1	0	0	1
J.SMART	2	3	2	2	9	1	0	1	0	2	2	2	3	1	8	3	1	0	0	0	2
A.BURKE	5	6	2	1	14	2	2	1	1	6	1	0	5	3	9	0	1	0	2	0	4
B.THOMPSON	3	2	0	0	5	1	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	2	5	1	0	0	2	0
D.KRETSCHMER	0	2	7	4	13	0	0	2	1	3	2	2	3	2	9	1	0	0	0	0	1
M.VISKA	2	3	0	2	7	1	0	1	1	3	1	3	5	1	10	0	2	0	0	0	0
R.WAUGH	9	0	0	0	9	3	1	0	0	4	1	1	0	0	2	1	2	0	0	0	1
S.NICHOLAS	0	2	1	1	4	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	1	2	6	0	0	0	0	0	2
L.OTTENS	0	0	2	1	3	0	2	1	0	3	0	4	4	4	12	1	2	0	0	3	0
S.GEPP	4	1	5	2	12	0	0	2	0	2	2	1	2	0	5	0	0	2	1	0	0
N.CHIGWIDDEN	4	3	1	1	9	0	0	0	0	0	5	1	6	2	14	2	0	0	1	0	0
M.RAIDIS	3	1	4	1	9	0	1	0	1	2	2	2	0	3	7	3	1	0	1	0	3
S.WATTS	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
J.BROOKS	0	2	3	4	9	0	1	2	0	3	0	1	3	1	5	1	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	41	34	49	35	159	13	10	19	7	49	26	29	45	27	127	19	15	11	7	16	18

SANFL DETAILS

Norwood	3.4	5.5	8.12	11.15	(81)
West	1.1	6.2	7.3	8.3	(51)

BEST — Norwood: Harvey, Jarman, Bowman, Downsborough, McCormack, Thiessen, Pitt, Rowe, O'Brien. **West**: Banik, Walsh, Jones, Green, Edwards, Parker, Nathan.
SCORERS — Norwood: Harvey 4.0, Rowe 2.2, Smart, Molloy 2.1, West 1.1, Jarman 0.3, Clements 0.2, Downsborough 0.1, rushed 0.4. **West**: Nathan 2.0, Mellor 1.1, Banik, E. Richardson, Woosnam, Barrett, Symes 1.0, Walsh 0.1, rushed 0.1.
INJURIES — West: Gilbert (hamstring), Barrett (thigh).
UMPIRES — R. Bettridge, M. Humphreys, T. Pfeiffer.
CROWD — 2900 at Norwood Oval.
BEST ON GROUND — Anthony Harvey (Norwood).
TOP TEAM MAN — Lachlan Bowman (Norwood).

South	7.3	8.8	12.9	14.12	(96)
Glenelg	2.1	5.4	8.5	11.7	(73)

BEST — South: Fernee, McCartney, Draper, Cameron, Farkas, Mills, Crawshay. **Glenelg**: Burke, Rombotis, Raidis, Tudor, L. Ottens, Viska, Kretschmer.
SCORERS — South: Farkas 5.1, Stoeckel 3.1, Cameron 2.1, Mills 1.2, McCartney, Keam 1.1, Norman 1.0, Genovese, Fernee, 0.1, rushed 0.3. **Glenelg**: Rombotis 4.0, Tudor 3.1, Gepp 2.1, Scripps, Reubenicht 1.0, Burke 0.2, Chigwidden, 0.1, rushed 0.2.
INJURIES — South: Murton (thigh), Harwood (knock to head). **Glenelg**: Thornborrow (knee) replaced by L. Ottens, McLean (back), Waugh (shoulder).
UMPIRES — R. Williams, C. Rowston, D. Kowal.
CROWD — 2016 at Noarlunga Oval.
BEST ON GROUND — Ashley Fernee (South).
TOP TEAM MAN — Michael Raidis (