

Pumped-up Bloods aren't the easybeats

JAI BEDNALL

WEST Adelaide coach Andrew Collins has hailed the newfound maturity of his group after a composed 20-point win against Glenelg at Richmond on Friday night.

The game began in a frustrating fashion for the home side - they missed numerous shots at goal, conceded almost every time the Tigers took the ball inside 50m and were on the wrong side of several umpiring decisions.

The frustration threatened to boil over in the second term when defender Adam Hartlett was penalised for back-chatting an umpire, which allowed Glenelg to kick consecutive goals and establish a 20-point lead.

In previous years West may have unravelled but the Bloods stuck to their task and eventually overwhelmed the much younger Glenelg outfit by sheer weight of possession.

"It's the maturity of the group, just hanging in there when things weren't going as well as they could early," Collins said.

"We've had many of those experiences and now we're learning to play them out... It would have been a really frustrating game to lose."

The Bloods are now perfectly positioned to secure a finals double chance, moving two games and percentage clear of the fourth-ranked Tigers.

It's an exciting position compared to where West was last season, when a late season defeat against Glenelg ended its finals chances.

"We're the new boy coming now, we're no longer the easybeats of the competition," Collins said.

"We weren't ready for finals footy last year. We hoped - for the footy club's sake - we'd learn and we're a stronger unit for it."

Glenelg scrapped hard for most of the night but continually turned the ball over when going into attack.

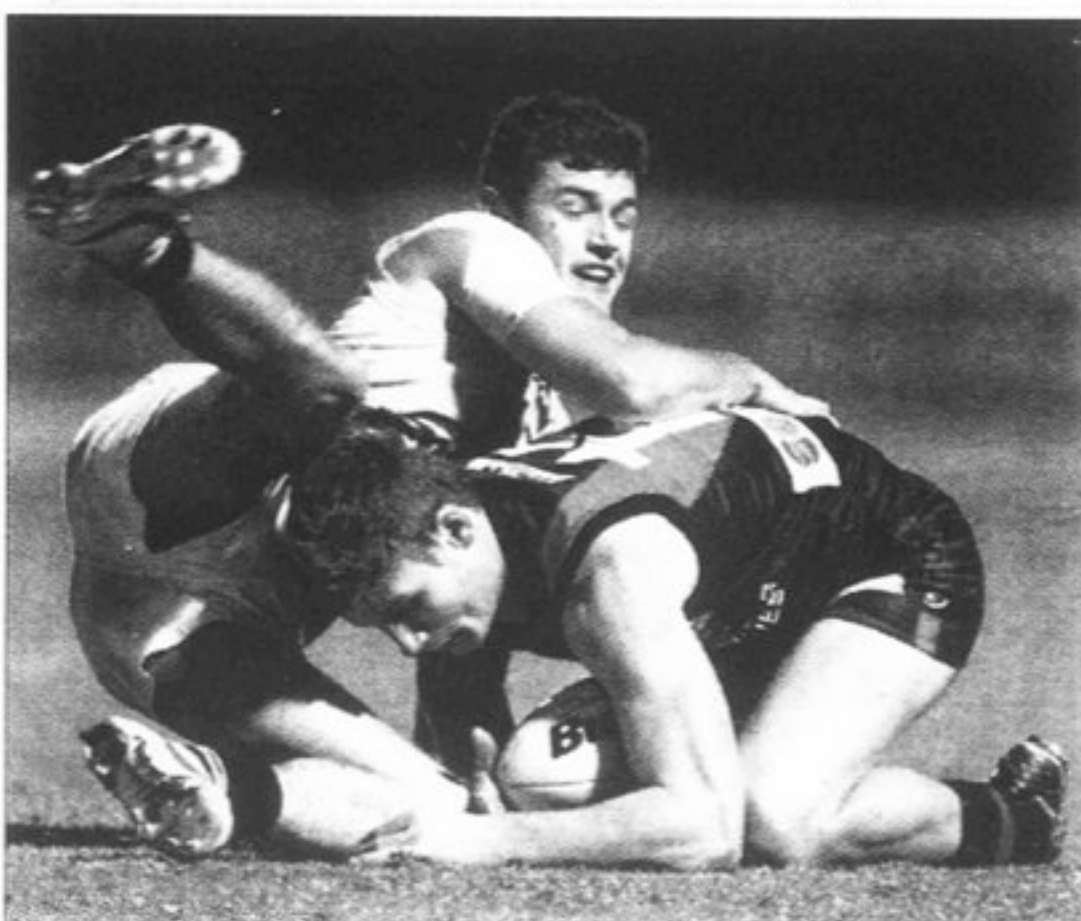
And it wasn't always an issue that could be attributed to inexperience.

WEST 2.4 4.8 8.10 12.16 (68)
GLENELG 4.0 8.2 10.2 11.2 (68)

BEST - West: Schmidt, Ferguson, Crouch, Beech, Macreadie, Hartlett. Glenelg: Lynch, Allen, Bradley, Scharenberg, Davenport.

SCORERS - West: Brad Fisher 2.3, N. Caruso 2.0, Macreadie 1.2, Birss, Beech 1.1, Schmidt, Willits, Ben Fisher, Slattery, Bricknell 1.0, Ezard 0.2, Fielke, Webb 0.1, rushed 0.5. Glenelg: Hitchcock 1.1, Tenace, Bradley, Allen, Trembath, Curran, Milne, Lyons, Pitt, Kennedy, Scharenberg 1.0, rushed 0.1.

UMPIRES - T. Medlin, A. Crosby, C. Deboy.



Gotcha: West Adelaide's Cam Hitchcock tackles the Bloods' Rory Laird on Friday night. **Picture:** Simon Cross

There was a key moment in the third term when youngsters Ben Kennedy and Harrison Gill took strong contested marks to set up a forward entry, only for Ty Allen and Kane Tenace to combine for a turnover.

"Our ability to keep ball on body, execution and our ball movement pattern (cost us the game)," Tigers coach Kris Massie said.

"Some of our mistakes affected the morale of the group in a way. We just made basic skill errors. Not just once or twice, but over and over and over again."

Despite the lopsided number of scoring shots (West had 28 to 13), the Tigers showed enough to suggest they're capable of hanging on to a finals spot.

The debut of 16-year-old Matt Scharenberg was also a brightspot, as he tallied 20 disposals, 10 marks and a goal.

"The pleasing thing is the guys who have come into the

side this year have shown good qualities," Massie said.

"Matt performed adequately tonight and has a super future ahead of him."

"We've got to really know in our own mind who is going to take our footy club forward and why not know now?"

The Tigers felt the absence of key forward Ruory Kirkby - whose 135 consecutive games streak was broken by a hamstring strain.

Massie is unsure when Kirkby will return.

"The medicos said one week but it could be two," he said. "He is the centrepiece of our forward structure but it will provide opportunity for someone else."

The SANFL round continues today with two games that have huge implications in the race for fifth.

South hosts North and the Eagles travel to Sturt, with all four sides still eyeing a finals berth.

PREMIERSHIP TABLE

| | P | W | L | D | F | A | Pc | Pts |
|---------|----|----|----|---|------|------|------|-----|
| Norwood | 14 | 13 | 1 | - | 1271 | 774 | 62.2 | 26 |
| Central | 15 | 10 | 5 | - | 1323 | 1059 | 55.5 | 20 |
| West | 14 | 9 | 5 | - | 1038 | 870 | 54.4 | 18 |
| Glenelg | 14 | 7 | 7 | - | 1123 | 1230 | 47.7 | 14 |
| North | 14 | 6 | 8 | - | 1153 | 1300 | 47.0 | 12 |
| Port | 14 | 5 | 9 | - | 1235 | 1239 | 49.9 | 10 |
| South | 14 | 5 | 9 | - | 1185 | 1309 | 47.5 | 10 |
| Eagles | 15 | 5 | 10 | - | 1040 | 1353 | 43.5 | 10 |
| Sturt | 14 | 4 | 10 | - | 1059 | 1293 | 45.0 | 8 |

LEADING GOALKICKERS

| | Rd 17 | Total |
|----------------------|-------|-------|
| T. McIntyre (Sturt) | 4.1 | 34.13 |
| Brad Fisher (West) | 2.3 | 33.14 |
| L. Johnston (North) | 2.0 | 33.10 |
| M. Wundke (South) | 5.0 | 33.9 |
| J. Hardy (Central) | 3.1 | 33.8 |
| A. Ainger (South) | - | 30.9 |
| L. Jericho (Norwood) | - | 26.17 |
| R. Kirkby (Glenelg) | - | 26.10 |

SATURDAY

| | | | | | |
|---------|-----|-----|-------|-------|-------|
| PORT | 5.4 | 9.5 | 12.10 | 16.14 | (110) |
| CENTRAL | 2.1 | 4.4 | 6.6 | 7.9 | (51) |

BEST - Port: Raikiwasa, Gray, Jacobs, Clayton, Rose, Salopek, Wilson, Watt. Central: Habel, Dutschke, Thomas, Boyd.

SCORERS - Port: Wilson, Dolling 2.4, Meiklejohn, Gray, Salopek 2.0, Clayton 1.2, Rose, Harder, Robson, Raikiwasa, Jacobs 1.0, Mercer 0.2, Hoskin 0.1, rushed 0.1. Central: Hardy 3.1, Waldhuter, Habel, Boyd, Schiller 1.0, Lawton 0.2, O'Sullivan, Dutschke, Thomas, Templeton 0.1, rushed 0.2.

INJURIES - Port: Beard (corked thigh).

UMPIRES - T. Dey, M. Oates, M. Schramm.

YESTERDAY

| | | | | | |
|--------|-----|-----|-------|-------|------|
| EAGLES | 4.4 | 5.8 | 10.10 | 13.17 | (95) |
| STURT | 2.3 | 9.6 | 10.8 | 12.8 | (80) |

BEST - Eagles: Raymond, Parry, Powell, Jarrad, Staple, Cicolella. Sturt: Sheedy, Tambling, Riley, McIntyre, Anderson.

SCORERS - Eagles: Grocke 4.4, Staple 3.1, Knights 2.3, Hall 1.2, Raymond, Kane 1.1, Parry 1.0, Lane, Jarrad 0.2, Salter 0.1. Sturt: McIntyre 4.1, Duldig 3.2, Evans 1.1, Krause, McLeay, Jaensch, Plant 1.0, Riley, Greenslade 0.1, rushed 0.2.

INJURIES - Eagles: Salter (foot). **REPORT** - Sturt: McIntyre, for alleged forceful front-on contact.

UMPIRES - S. Thompson, C. Bowen, J. Ralston.

| | | | | | |
|-------|-----|-----|-------|-------|------|
| NORTH | 4.5 | 6.6 | 12.12 | 13.13 | (91) |
| SOUTH | 1.2 | 7.4 | 9.6 | 13.7 | (85) |

BEST - North: G. Thring, Allan, Thiele, M. Thring, Currie, Clisby, Ryswyk. South: Murphy, Taylor, Veide, Liddle, Rolfe.

SCORERS - North: Alleyway 2.4, Johnston, Blee, M. Thring 2.0, Thiele 1.2, Allan 1.1, Thompson, Currie, Ryswyk 1.0, Bennett, Clisby, Teasdale, Makins 0.1, rushed 0.2. South: Wundke 5.0, Rolfe, De Visser 2.0, Liddle, Cross, Veide, Daniel 1.0, Pfeiffer 0.2, Murphy, Stribling, Brooksby, Taylor 0.1, rushed 0.1.

INJURIES - North: Teasdale (shoulder).

REPORT - South: Rolfe, for alleged forceful front-on high contact by umpire Haussen, in the third quarter.

UMPIRES - M. Avon, L. Haussen, R. Hundertmark.

CROWD - 1871 at Hickinbotham Oval.

DRAW

ROUND 18 - Friday: Norwood v Port (Coopers Stadium). Saturday: Glenelg v Central (Gliderol Stadium), North v West (Prospect Oval). Sunday: South v Sturt (Hickinbotham Oval). Bye: Eagles.

SANFL PLAYER OF THE YEAR

| West Adelaide v Glenelg | | |
|----------------------------------|-------|---|
| Chris Schmidt (West Adelaide) | ..... | 3 |
| Ryan Ferguson (West Adelaide) | ..... | 2 |
| Tom Lynch (Glenelg) | ..... | 1 |
| Port Adelaide v Central District | | |
| Aseri Raikiwasa (Port Adelaide) | ..... | 3 |
| Sam Gray (Port Adelaide) | ..... | 2 |
| Ben Jacobs (Port Adelaide) | ..... | 1 |
| Sturt v Eagles | | |
| Phillip Raymond (Eagles) | ..... | 3 |
| Craig Parry (Eagles) | ..... | 2 |
| Jade Sheedy (Sturt) | ..... | 1 |
| South Adelaide v North Adelaide | | |
| George Thring (North Adelaide) | ..... | 3 |
| James Allan (North Adelaide) | ..... | 2 |
| Cohen Thiele (North Adelaide) | ..... | 1 |

LEADERS - 16: Nathan Batsanis (Norwood). 14: Chris Schmidt (West). 12: Nick Liddle (South). Joel Cross (South). James Allan (North). 10: James Boyd (Central), Brad Symes (Central). 9: Ryan Williams (Central), Adam Hartlett (West). James Bennett (North). 8: Brett Zorzi (Norwood). 7: Sam Gray (Port). 6: Jarryd Lyons (Glenelg), Jaryd Cachia (Norwood), George Thring (North).