

Boyd inspires Legs' response

ANDREW CAPEL

TOUGH and spirited Norwood avoided a second consecutive straight sets finals exit with a powerful 28-point first semi-final win against Glenelg at Adelaide Oval on Sunday.

Displaying far more intensity than in their heavy qualifying final loss to Adelaide, the Redlegs dominated at the coalface, taking advantage of an early back injury suffered by the 'Tigers' best clearance player Matthew Snook.

With Snook playing limited game time in the first half and ruled out of the match at half-time, Norwood, given great service from ruckman Harry Boyd, won the clearance battle 44-34, which proved decisive in the knockout final.

The victory saw the Redlegs advance to their first preliminary final since 2011 and snap a run of four consecutive finals defeats.

SANFL Team of the Year lead ruckman Boyd gave his midfielders silver service, having 46 hit-outs and feeding clearance kings Matthew Panos (seven clearances), Nik Rokahr (six) and Matthew Nunn (five). Boyd had an equal team-high seven clearances himself, along with 17 disposals and a goal.

"Leadership is so important at this time of the year and Harry exemplifies it in every facet," Norwood coach Jade Rawlings said.

"His influence was significant and when he took the mark and kicked the goal in the third quarter it was a huge play. He is a crucial player and leader in our footy club and it showed out."

Boyd was a difference-maker despite the lionhearted performance of Glenelg triple Ken Farmer Medallist Liam McBean, a star forward who has been forced to finish the season in ruck because of the Tigers' lack of ruck options.

McBean had a game-high 10 clearances and kicked two goals when stationed forward

	NORWOOD	79
	1.3 5.5 7.7 12.7	
	GLENELG	51
	3.2 4.4 4.8 7.9	

CAPEL'S BEST

Norwood: Boyd, Panos, Rokahr, Kennerley, Heard, Ball, Hamilton, Nunn.

Glenelg: McBean, Allen, Stretch, Bailey, Partington, Kuller, Pink.

GOALS

Norwood: Panos 3, McLean, Rantall 2, Jarvis, Hamilton, Lowe, Boyd, Nunn.

Glenelg: McBean 2, Allen, Kuller, Reynolds, Chandler, Partington.

INJURIES

Glenelg: Snook (back), Gerloff (elbow).

UMPIRES

Lewis, Harris, Bowen.

CROWD

8036 at Adelaide Oval.

in the last term. But with Snook labouring early and then out of the game, Norwood had more midfield options.

Glenelg, which regained 2019 Magarey Medallist Luke Partington after he missed two games with a foot/ankle injury, started well. It kicked three of the four goals scored in the opening term to grab an 11-point lead, with Matthew Allen shining on a wing with seven first-term disposals and a long goal.

But the danger signs were flashing, with Snook looking sore and limping to the bench for medical treatment. He started the second quarter on the field but didn't finish the term and had his game prematurely ended with only four disposals and one tackle.

The Redlegs took advantage. They worked their way back into the contest in workmanlike fashion and then grabbed the game by the scruff of the neck. Boosted by a plus-11 clearance advantage in the first half, Norwood kicked four goals to one in the second term to seize a seven-point lead.



Norwood's Harry Boyd rules over Glenelg's Riley Holder in the Redlegs' semi-final win on Sunday. Picture: David Mariuz/SANFL

WE PLAYED NORWOOD WAY AGAIN: RAWLINGS

ANDREW CAPEL

COACH Jade Rawlings lauded his men for regaining their mojo and returning to the "Norwood way" in the knockout final against Glenelg.

A week after being tentative and reactive in their qualifying final loss to Adelaide, Rawlings said his team "got the game looking like a Norwood game again".

"It's what we do (play a tough, contested brand)," Rawlings said after the 28-point victory, which kept the Redlegs' season alive and ended the Tigers' year.

"When you have a way of playing you want to put it on show in finals and we didn't last week, at all.

"When you don't fire a shot in a big game it's a tough pill to swallow. You have two options - you can either tuck it under the carpet or confront it, look it in the eye.

"We did the latter and that's why I'm so satisfied with the performance of the group, that we got to work, reviewed it, put our hands up and took accountability for

performance - players and staff - and made sure our preparation wasn't going to be the same going into this week's game. I thought we reaped the benefits from that, trained with great intent. We played a skill-based turnover game against Adelaide and got exposed.

"We don't have 117 points kicked against us (like the Crows did), so we went back to the foundation of our game and kept Glenelg to four goals until three-quarter-time and seven for the game, which was really pleasing."

Glenelg coach Brett Hand lamented the early loss of star midfielder Matthew Snook with a back injury - "it took away our best midfielder," he said - but he said his side also shot itself in the foot with poor disposal and decision-making.

"Norwood was cleaner under pressure than we were," Hand said. "I thought we had enough of the ball to have an impact (21 more disposals) but we kicked the ball back to them and some of our decision making going forward hurt us."