

TENACIOUS TIGERS STAGE REMARKABLE COMEBACK



Sturt's Sam Wundke spoils Glenelg's Luke Reynolds and (above) Sturt's James Richards is tackled by Tiger Matthew Snook. Pictures: SANFL Image/David Mariuz

ANDREW CAPEL

SPIRITED Glenelg climbed off the canvas to stage one of its greatest comebacks against Sturt in a pulsating contest at Wigan Oval on Saturday.

Seemingly down and out when they trailed a rampant Double Blues outfit by 34 points midway through the third quarter, the Tigers dug deep under pressure to kick nine of the next 10 goals to clinch a thrilling eight-point win.

"A comeback like that makes you pretty proud," relieved Glenelg coach Brett Hand said.

"I always had belief in the group and our fitness and we made some adjustments at half-time that really worked for us.

"They enabled us to give our forwards more opportunities one on one and they are pretty hard to beat one on one.

"We hang our hat on our contested ball and last week (against Norwood) we were smacked. This week we were pretty good in that situation."

The Tigers, last year's beaten grand finalists, started well to lead by 16 points at quarter-time but, inspired by former Crow Patrick Wilson, Sturt took control in the second quarter to seize a 10-point advantage at the long break.

Expected to be one of this season's big improvers after winning seven of their last nine games last year, the Double Blues appeared to blow the game wide open with consecutive goals from Wilson early in the third term.

When key forward Oliver Grivell kicked Sturt's eighth consecutive goal 10 minutes into the quarter, the home side led by 34

GLENELG		83	
3.5	3.9	9.10	12.11
STURT		75	
1.1	5.7	10.7	11.9

CAPEL'S BEST

Glenelg: Snook, Partington, Allen, Murdoch, Bradley, Turner, McBean.

Sturt: Wilson, Battersby, Lewis, Page, Carey, Slimming, Shute.

GOALS

Glenelg: McBean 4, Hosie 3, Turner 2, Gerloff, Horsnell, Allen.

Sturt: Richards, Wilson, Shute 2, Hone, Mathews, Slimming, Grivell, Davis.

UMPIRES

Scott, Hughes, Medlin.

CROWD

2529 at Unley Oval.

points. But Glenelg, boosted by the return of star midfielder Matthew Snook and a lift in intensity from fellow on-ballers Luke Partington and Brett Turner, was stung into action.

It kicked six goals in 17 minutes, including three from triple Ken Farmer Medallist Liam McBean, to cut the deficit to just three points at the final change.

The Bays then kicked the first three goals of the last term to push 16 points clear before Sturt made a late charge to close the gap.

Snook, who played reserves in the opening round as he regains fitness after a late start to pre-season training, was outstanding with 24 disposals and seven clearances, while Partington had six clearances and Turner five as Glenelg won the key statistic 40-34.

The win was the Tigers' second on the trot while Sturt is 1-1.

But Martin Mattner's side would have lost few admirers on Saturday.

glenelgfc.com.au

Tigers pull off huge comeback against Double Blues

– Brett Hand, Senior Coach

Wigan Oval, Saturday 9th April, 2:10pm

With the sun shining on a warm Autumn day, Wigan Oval was looking a treat and we were excited for the challenge ahead against a team that finished last season strongly and had played some very good football in their trial games.

We came prepared for a tough contest and that is exactly what we got with, both sides having big scoring periods of the game. With our 7th debutant for the year Jordan Moore standing in for Max Proud due to Covid Protocols, we were excited to see what he could do on the big stage.

The game started with a fiercely competitive midfield group on both teams trying to give their forward line first use of the ball, and there were numerous stoppages and not a lot of free flowing football. We expected Sturt to be very strong with their defensive work and we were able to hit the scoreboard with our entries, albeit inaccurately at times kicking three goals five.

The second started again with us missing a number of shots on goal.

Sturt were able to pounce on our inaccuracy and took control of the game, making the most of our turnovers kicking the only four goals of the quarter. We were lucky not to be down by more. Sturt's ability to win the ball back from our poor entries inside 50 made it difficult for us to score when we went forward.

The third quarter saw a couple of undisciplined acts costing us free kicks and goals against, and they made the most of these with capitalising on the scoreboard. At the 12-minute mark our players started to apply a lot more pressure and play to our plan, and we were able to give our forwards opportunities and they made the most of them. Luke Partington, Corey Lyons and Matt Snook were starting to get their hands on the ball and their pressure around the contest was excellent. Andrew Bradley, Sam Durdin and Jordan Murdoch were solid in defence and started up a lot of our ball movement which was good to see. We had seven shots from our 13

inside 50 entries, and unlike the first quarter, we made the most of them by kicking six goals.

With the sun still high in the sky and players from both teams feeling the effects of the heat, it was going to come down to which team was able to win the ball and give their forwards first opportunity. In the first 5 minutes of the final quarter we had the ball inside 50 but missed a few chances until we finally hit the front. Then, we were able to kick another couple of goals to put us 16 points in front at the 15 minute mark.

It's never good having teams kick a number of goals in a row on you, but I was pleased with the way we stuck to our plan, and it was evident that if we could get our hands on the ball we would be able to impact the scoreboard. It also shows that this new group of players have a never say die attitude. Their belief in what we are doing is strong and they were mentally strong to stick to the plan in tough conditions.