

Wilson's class and brute strength lead Sturt to stunning opening

GORDON ARMSTRONG

STURT'S relentless pressure and ability to convert more chances in attack proved the difference in its victory against Glenelg at Unley Oval on Saturday.

Celebrating a rewarding off-season with their new-look Jack Oatey Stand, the Double Blues took charge on the ground to win by 31 points, ending a three-year losing run against the Tigers.

Patrick Wilson, if he can keep injury free, should be a major factor for Sturt this season. A touch of class, brute strength and ability to produce a game lifter was evident. It summed up his and his team's day with his third goal on the siren to end the game. Usual suspect James Battersby was another key player, while former AFL speedster Marty Frederick featured with two goals and plenty of run.

Early on it was a struggle for both sides and the first 20 minutes of the second quarter provided plenty of turnovers by hand and foot. But Sturt turned around its fortunes with three late goals, led by Wilson, to lead by 17 points at the long break. Dominating the early part of the third quarter, Sturt pushed out the lead to 29 points before Glenelg kicked two quick goals to look back in the game. But that was short-lived as a flurry of Blues goals followed.

Sturt coach Marty Mattner said it was an excellent kick-off to the season for his side with plenty of upside, the early mistakes more the heat from both teams.

"It was a contested and hot game of footy," Mattner said. "It was a good, tough win. The Bays have been a very good side in the past five years so we knew we had to bring the pressure. There were errors but I thought it was the pressure.

"They (Glenelg) were chasing the game a bit, so we knew we had to keep attacking and putting on the pressure. We had a number of good players but Wilson was something special."

Former Brisbane player Connor McFadyen and Liam Puncher debuted for Sturt and played well.

For the Bays it was largely a dirty day. One highlight, though, was a series of strong marks from defence in the last quarter which resulted in a mark and goal to Luke Reynolds.

But the side stuck to its guns to threaten in the last quarter. Coach Darren Reeves, in his first game as senior coach, said his side kept at it but was hurt by turnovers and at times by some areas of discipline.

"All credit to Sturt, they out-thunted us and deserved to win," Reeves said. "We were a bit undisciplined at times and turnovers hurt us. We had chances to score but couldn't."

	NORTH 4.6 6.11 8.15 10.19	79
	WEST 2.2 4.7 5.8 9.9	63

PARTLAND'S BEST
North Adelaide: Combe, Wigg, Spina, Craig, Young, van Huisstede, Finlay.

West Adelaide: Morrish, J. Ryan, Park, K. Ryan, Gore.

GOALS
North Adelaide: Ramsey 3, Patmore, Harvey 2, White, Hilder, Casalini.

West Adelaide: Gore 4, Maguire 2, Delahunty, Beech, Stevens.

UMPIRES
Sboro, Hughes, Williams.

CROWD
2695 at Prospect Oval.

	STURT 2.2 5.2 9.6 12.8	80
	GLENELG 2.0 2.3 4.7 7.7	49

ARMSTRONG'S BEST
Sturt: Wilson, Battersby, Frederick, Lewis, Voss, Dakin, Amos. **Glenelg:** Snook, Partington, Lyons, Bailey, Turner, Allen.

GOALS
Sturt: Wilson 3, Richards, Parker, Frederick, Hone 2, Dakin. **Glenelg:** Reynolds 2, McBean, Hosie, McGree, Turner, Lyons.

UMPIRES
Scott, Millar, Hardy.

CROWD
3389 at Wigan Oval, Unley.



Sturt skipper James Battersby boots the Blues deep into attack despite a desperate tackle from Tiger Luke Partington. Picture: Cory Sutton

	NORWOOD 0.3 1.4 3.5 6.9	45
	EAGLES 3.0 8.3 11.6 14.7	91

PARTLAND'S BEST
Redlegs: Hardie, Rowe, Thompson, Williams, Ballenden, D'Aloia, Pudney. **Eagles:** Evans, Nunn, Ball, Boyd, Rokahr.

GOALS
Redlegs: Binder, Bogle, Boyd, Lowden, McLean, Saunders. **Eagles:** Williams 4, Ballenden 2, Goldsworthy 2, Hardie 2, Rowe 2, Beecken, Weckert.

REPORTS
Eagles: McFarlane (dangerous tackle).

CROWD
3532 at Coopers Stadium

	ADELAIDE 3.0 8.2 14.5 19.10	124
	PORT 2.2 3.6 5.8 6.10	46

BARRETT'S BEST
Adelaide: Schoenberg, Newchurch, McPherson, Crouch, Keane, Hately, Strachan, McHenry, Borlase. **Port:** N. Moore, Sinn, Williams, Dumont, Jackson.

GOALS
Adelaide: Newchurch 4, Schoenberg, Himmelberg 3, McHenry, Wright 2, Taylor, Madgen, Strachan, McKenzie, Hately. **Port:** Lord, Sutcliffe, Hagan, Hayes, Scully, Georgiades.

INJURIES
Adelaide: Bond (knee).

UMPIRES
Sobieraj, Bennett, Lewis.

	SOUTH 2.4 3.7 8.10 10.12	72
	CENTRAL 2.0 3.2 4.2 7.4	46

CAPEL'S BEST
South: Skinner, O'Neill, Sproule, Brooksby, Clavarino, Gibbs, Haines, Freitag. **Central:** Hoskin, Grant, McLennan, Nietschke, Schiller.

GOALS
South: Sproule 3, Freitag, Wilkinson, Brown 2, Schuback. **Central:** East 2, Barreau, Grace, Whitelum, Nietschke, Dudley.

INJURIES
South: Mutch (concussion).

UMPIRES
Galletly, Harris, Beyer.

CROWD
1234 at Flinders University Stadium, Noarlunga.

COACH'S MATCH REPORT – GLENELG V STURT – ROUND 1, 2023

Sturt outrun Tigers in season opener

Wigan Oval, Saturday 1st April, 2:10pm

Sturt	2.2	5.2	9.6	12.8	80
Glenelg	2.0	2.3	4.7	7.7	49

Goals: Luke Reynolds 2, Liam McBean, Corey Lyons, Cam McGree, Brett Turner, Lachie Hosie

Best: Darcy Bailey, Cam McGree, Matthew Snook, Toby Pink, Matthew Allen

Disposals: M. Snook 27, D. Bailey 22, L. Partington 20, C. Lyons 19, B. Turner 19, M. Allen 16, B. Stretch 15

Magarey Medal: 3 – Patrick Wilson (St), 2 – James Battersby (St), 1 – Matthew Snook (Gl)

After a strong preseason, we entered round 1 with some confidence in how our group had attacked everything we had asked of them, and we were feeling good about the direction we are taking and what it can look like as the season progresses.

We headed to Wigan Oval to take on a strong Sturt Football Club, knowing that they are one of the well credentialed teams in the 2023 SANFL season. Full credit to Sturt as they were far too strong for us over the four quarters and certainly deserved the win on the day.

While we are disappointed in the result, we are aware that it is the start of a long season. We will review the game strongly, look at the areas that continue to be areas of growth, and equally we will look at some areas we were good in. There were some things out of the game that we were happy

with and give us some nice confidence into round 2 this weekend.

One of the big growth areas we are working towards as a club is our consistency to compete at a high level for longer periods. We are confident in what some of our good football looks like, we are also aware that some of our poor football is not good enough and our ability to limit those periods and find an in-between level is one of our important areas of improvement. That was evident on the weekend, where in parts of the game we were able to have it on our terms and play the game in our forward half. While we didn't capitalise like we had hoped on the scoreboard, we are happy in how we were able to do this.

The good teams in this competition are efficient at capitalising from turnovers, and Sturt were very good in this area on Saturday. This is and has been a focus of

ours and will continue to be in all our work as we look for the consistency we are after.

While the result wasn't what we were after, we will take some positive out of the opportunities we had over the day to get ourselves or keep ourselves in with a chance. That is important in our growth as a club – with the strength of the competition means there will some days when it is a struggle and the ability to keep at it and stay in the contest will be important.

A really pleasing result for our Reserves team with a 1-point victory over last year's Reserves premiers. While we didn't play our best football over the day as mentioned above, we were able to keep ourselves in the contest and find a way to get a result in the end.

– Darren Reeves, Senior Coach
glenelgfc.com.au