

# Flick Passes - Historical Footy Trivia

**1901**



When **PHIL SANDLAND** (pictured left) made his SAFA debut for North Adelaide in 1901 as a nineteen year old it was his first ever match in senior company. Seemingly untroubled by this, however, he was voted best afield, an achievement he would repeat with sufficient regularity over the course of the season to win the Magarey Medal as the Fairest and Most Brilliant player in the competition. Allegedly, when told of his win, he was unsure of exactly how to react in that he "had never heard of the Magarey Medal".

Sandland's memorable inaugural season comprised 14 Association games for North, plus both of South Australia's interstate matches for the year against the VFL. In 1902 he returned to the family farm in country South Australia but made a brief return visit to Adelaide later in the year when he was rushed into North Adelaide's team for its premiership-deciding match against South Adelaide. Sandland promptly proved that he still had what it took with a fine display in North's crushing 9.14 (68) to 4.7 (31) win. After spending a few more years on the family farm he relocated to Western Australia.<sup>1</sup>

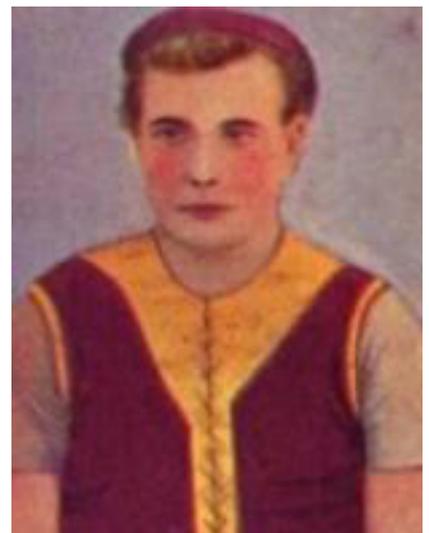
Thereafter, apart from an appearance in "Dinny" Reedman's testimonial match the following year, Phil Sandland never played senior football again. After the Reedman testimonial he returned to Western Australia where he lived until his death in 1970.

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<sup>1</sup> Information about Sandland's movements after his Magarey Medal season is courtesy of Nick Haines.

**1902**

The 1902 season saw **CARLTON** appoint **JOHN WORRALL** (shown at right during his playing career with Fitzroy) to oversee the team's training regime as well as to provide instruction and guidance on match days. In hindsight, he has come to be regarded as football's first coach, but he was certainly not the first person to be accorded that label. However, whereas clubs had appointed men as "coaches" before, their role had invariably been subsidiary to that of the team captain; Worrall, however, assumed complete control of all team-related matters, even donning football togs to participate in training. This revolutionary approach bore substantial fruit as, between 1906 and 1908, the Blues became the first team to win three consecutive VFL flags.



Jack Worrall went on to have a similar impact on the Essendon Football Club when he went there in 1911. In his debut season in charge, he lifted the club to its first premiership in a decade, and the following year he coached his team to the most conclusive VFL grand final win achieved up to that point, as the Same Old annihilated South Melbourne by 74 points.

After retiring as a coach at the end of the 1919 season, Worrall became a celebrated if somewhat opinionated sports writer. He died in 1937 at the age of seventy-seven.



Hobart-born **FRED MCGINIS** (shown above) commenced his senior football career with local club City, but before long he ventured across the Bass Strait to try his luck in the 'big time' with Melbourne. Still aged only seventeen, he made his debut with the Redlegs in 1894, and it was immediately obvious that here was a rare champion in the making. By the time the VFL came into existence in 1897 he was, in the view of many, the finest exponent of the game in Victoria at the time, as his "splendid drop kicking, pertinacity in redeeming a mistake, determination in getting the ball, and coolness and quickness in passing it on to a team mate placed him in a class above his contemporaries".<sup>1</sup> Playing as a rover, McGinis continued to perform at a consistently high level for the first four years of the league, with his only major weakness being that he was somewhat injury prone.

In 1900, McGinis' partnership with ruckmen 'Vic' Cumberland and George Moodie was a major factor in Melbourne's unexpected surge up the premiership ladder to take out the flag. The same trio also represented the VFL in intercolonial matches.

Tragically, in 1902 McGinis' sight began to deteriorate alarmingly, and he was forced to quit the game and return home to Tasmania. A testimonial match was hastily arranged prior to his departure in which a VFL representative side played and defeated a VFA combination 9.17 (71) to 4.5 (29). It was the first contest between the two bodies since the establishment of the VFL in 1897. The game, which was played at the MCG, attracted a crowd of roughly 7,000 and raised £500 for THE MCGINIS BENEFIT FUND.

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<sup>1</sup> *100 Years Of Football: The Story Of The Melbourne Football Club 1858-1958* by E.C.H.Taylor, pages 30-31.

## 1903

At three quarter time of a VFA match between Preston and **PORT MELBOURNE** it was discovered that the latter had been playing with an extra man. The score at the time was 3.12 (30) to 0.6 (6) in Preston's favour but Port's indiscretion meant that their entire score was annulled. Needless to say Port ended up losing the match, but they must have derived some stimulus from their misfortune as the final term saw them outscore their opponents 4.1 to 2.2.

## 1905

Interstate matches between **SOUTH AUSTRALIA** and the **VFL** were suspended in 1904 owing to a disagreement over the allocation of gate money. The VFL could happily do without interstate

football as club matches were considerably more popular, but the South Australian football loving public enjoyed seeing their heroes pitting their strength against the best from across the border, and interstate matches were very well attended - and financially lucrative - as a consequence. In 1904 South Australia played its first ever match against Western Australia, but in 1905, with the situation with the VFL still unresolved, it faced a dilemma, which was ultimately resolved when it was agreed to play home and away matches against the VFA.

Perhaps a little surprisingly, the two teams proved extremely evenly matched. South Australia won both encounters in 1905, but only by margins of 7 points in Melbourne and 3 points in Adelaide. For the next half a dozen seasons South Australia and the VFL remained at loggerheads and matches between the South Australians and the VFA continued. All told, the teams met one another on a total of thirteen occasions, with South Australia emerging victorious seven times and the VFA six.

## 1906

Following an extraordinarily acrimonious clash between Essendon and his beloved **MELBOURNE**, "Billy T." felt constrained to record his feelings in what might very charitably be termed poetry. In a way, it was an early twentieth century equivalent of today's social media.

*Begob, it was a lovely game, a game iv blood an' hair,  
Wid a thrifle iv torn whiskers an' an eyelid here and there,  
And iv all the darlin' bla'guards that was afther raisin' Cain  
There was niver one like Nolan. Whoop for Oireland once again!  
Yes a jooel, Mister Nolan,  
Yer a bhoy there's no conthrollin,  
And when Erin wants a Saviour sure we'll send our noble Nolan.*

*When the foight was at its hottest how he charged th' writhin' mob,  
He whirled his fists, and yelled "Whooroo!" and punched 'em in the gob.  
The riots home in Belfast they was nothin' worth a word  
To the lovely dose of throuble that on Saturday occurred,  
When the splendid hero, Nolan,  
Sent the other divils rollin',  
And all Essendon was crippled by our lovely fightin' Nolan.*

*Poor Parkinson was waitin', an' he got it in th' jaw.  
And for anything that followed, sor, he didn't give a sthraw.  
On the ground th' bye was lyin', wid his eyes up to the sun,  
While his conqueror was layin' out the others, one by one –  
Was the dashin' Mither Nolan;  
It was bowls, an' he was bowlin',  
Wid th' bodies of his rivals, was th' harum scarum Nolan.*

*He jammed th' ball down Martin's throat, he did, upon me soul,  
And then he shwore the umpire blind he thought it was the goal.  
He whirled the players 'cross the field like feathers in th' breeze.  
He punched them wid his bunch of fives, he dug 'em wid his knees,  
Did that playful divil Nolan,  
Och! His style is so cajolin',  
Ye must have heart of iron if ye're not in love wid Nolan.*

*At the finish he was thereabout, his heart so full of fun,  
 That th' umpire couldn't shtop him wid a poleaxe or a gun.  
 An' when he'd filled th' Hos-pit-al wid players that was there,  
 He yelled: "Bring in all Essendon, its Council and its 'Mare'."  
 He's a bhoys there's no conthrollin',  
 And when Ireland's wantin' Home Rule, begob! We'll send her fightin' Nolan!*



**NORWOOD'S** tour of Victoria in July 1906 was noteworthy in giving the lie to widely held notions of VFL superiority. The Redlegs, who finished the season in third place in the SAFA, won all three of the matches they played: against Essendon (fourth in the VFL), a Ballarat Combined side, and VFL runner-up Fitzroy.

The opening match of the tour against Essendon was tight and low scoring, but Norwood fully deserved its 13 point victory. Indeed, their winning margin might have been greater had they not had such difficulty adjusting to the more lenient umpiring which prevailed in the VFL at the time. According to "The Argus", "Judging by the play of the two sides Adelaide games are more strictly umpired than ours, and the Norwoods were further hampered by the fact that they are penalised at home for kicking in the ruck, and could not at once adapt themselves to the greater freedom allowed by the league".

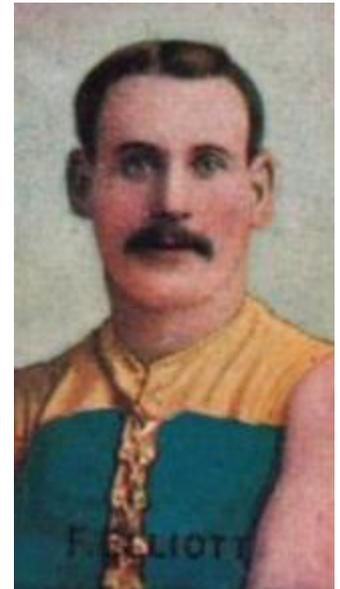
The Essendon match took place on Wednesday 25th July. On the following Saturday the Redlegs visited Ballarat where they were opposed by a strong local combination - so strong in fact that it proved capable of defeating a VFL combination by 5 goals during the 1906 season. Norwood found the going tough early. At the first change, they had managed just a solitary goal to Ballarat's 6, and at half time they still trailed by 23 points. A 5.4 to 0.1 third term turned things around, leaving Norwood 10 points to the good at the last change. Norwood then added 2 goals to 1 in the final term to win with deceptive comfort by 22 points, 11.12 (78) to 8.8 (56).

The final match of the tour saw Norwood facing Fitzroy. Carlton had also offered to play the tourists, and had offered identical terms to the Maroons, so the issue was resolved by means of the tossing of a coin. The Redlegs won the game in the opening quarter when they rattled on 7.2 to Fitzroy's solitary behind. Thereafter the 'Roys slightly outscored the visitors but they were never looked like making a realistic bid for victory. Norwood ultimately won by 30 points, 14.7 (91) to 8.13 (61).

The Redlegs would finally get their chance to meet Carlton at the end of the 1907 season in a match dubbed as being for "the championship of Australia". The clash took place on the Adelaide Oval, and once again Norwood emphasised what a strong team they were at the time by winning comfortably, as described in more detail on the following page.

## 1907

At the conclusion of the 1907 football season VFL premiers **CARLTON** visited Adelaide to play their SAFL counterparts **NORWOOD**. The match took place on Saturday 28th September on the Adelaide Oval, and was won with surprising comfort by the Redlegs, 13.12 (90) to 8.10 (58). On the following Monday Melbourne newspaper "The Argus" reported on the match, which it considered to have been "practically" for the championship of Australia. This qualifier is missing from South Australian accounts of the match which universally and unequivocally lauded Norwood as the Australia's champion team. In hindsight, it is the Victorian evaluation of the match which appears more reasonable, however, because a genuine Australian championship at the time in question must realistically have also involved the premier team of Western Australia. The same could justifiably be said of all subsequent so called "championship of Australia" matches prior to the championship series of 1972, in which the premiership-winning teams of both Western Australia and Tasmania participated for the first time.

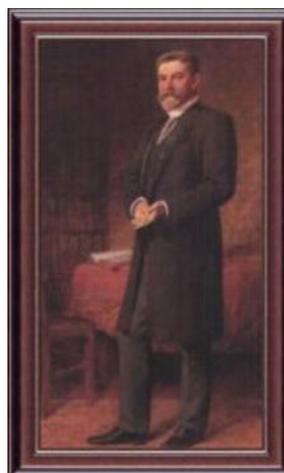


These caveats notwithstanding, the 1907 clash of the top South Australian and Victorian clubs provided the 13,000 spectators at the Adelaide Oval with a memorable spectacle. In the first half, the match was closely contested, with Norwood enjoying a 3 point advantage at the long break. The third quarter, however, saw the Redlegs dominant in all facets of the game, and rattling on 7 unanswered goals to sow the seeds of their eventual comfortable win.

The match was umpired by Lawrence "Lardy" Tulloch, an ex-Collingwood player who had umpired that year's VFL grand final.<sup>1</sup> After the Norwood-Carlton contest he proclaimed that, in his opinion, the best player afield was Norwood follower Charles Gwynne. Carlton skipper Jim Flynn conceded that his team had been outpaced by the Redlegs, and that although the Blues missed their star wingman George Bruce (a South Australian), his replacement in the team, Fred "Pompey" Elliott, pictured above right, was probably Carlton's best player on the day.

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<sup>1</sup> Tulloch had actually skippered the Magpies to the 1902 and 1903 premierships, and is the only VFL premiership captain to umpire a VFL premiership-deciding match.



## 1908

Prior to the commencement of the 1908 Jubilee carnival, Australian prime minister **ALFRED DEAKIN** (pictured above) attended a smoke concert organised by the VFL, which was attended

by all of the participating teams and, after proposing a toast to what he referred to as ‘the Australasian game of football’, spoke eloquently and at length about the sport’s uniqueness, importance and potential future development:

*“My days of football are past so many years that, although the memories are not clouded, I have perfect recollection that the game as I played it was conducted under rules rather foreign and much more literal than those which you now enjoy. But at that time, as now, I venture to think that the spirit which animated us was of no discredit to this country and no bad training for the youths of this country.....”*

*“The games of football that I have played since then have been many and various, and they have carried on in other fields, but I have yet to find the game that carries as much pleasure, as much harmless excitement, and as much stimulus as the Australasian game of football. The true sportsman, pitting himself at his best against an opponent under the rules of fair play, is the manifest man who walks this planet today.....”*

*“The sense of fair play that is first in the breast of every player is, I am sorry to say, not always the first in the breast of the man who is applauding merely for his own side. The task of football in the future is, I hope, not only to educate the players, but to educate the spectators to the same high sense of fair play.”*

*“In this country we are bound to remain, as we always have been, a sporting people. I venture to believe that the element added to our national life by our sporting instincts is one not of the least honourable, but often one of the most efficacious. After all, a healthy mind rests upon a healthy body..... The Australian game is becoming an Australasian game. And it may yet have an even wider scope as far as its education and practice are concerned.....”*

*“The game is Australian in its origin, Australian in its principle, and, I venture to say, essentially of Australian development. It and every expression of the sporting spirit go to make that manhood which is competent for a nation’s tasks. The fellow who can play an uphill game, and lose it with courage and good temper, is better fitted for the contests the world has in store for him.....”*

*“When the tocsin sounds the call to arms, not the last, but the first, to acknowledge it will be those who have played, and played well, the Australasian game of football before they play the Australian game of nation-making and nation-preserving.”<sup>1</sup>*



## 1909

A week after the 1909 VFL grand final, **SOUTH MELBOURNE** once again found themselves in action on the MCG, this time in an unofficial club championship of Australia decider against SAFL premier **WEST ADELAIDE**. Watched by a miserly crowd of roughly 8,000, the two teams produced a closely fought encounter in which South pulled away in the final term to win by 24

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<sup>1</sup> “The 1953 Australian Football Championship Official Souvenir Program”, page 37.

points, after having led by just a point at the last change. The main differences between the sides were South's superior fitness and their greater accuracy in front of goal. Final scores were South Melbourne 11.8 (74); West Adelaide 6.14 (50).

South Melbourne's grand final victory over **CARLTON** gave the club its sixth senior premiership, one more than the Blues. It also represented the Blues' first finals defeat since the 1905 final against Fitzroy, since which time they had been victorious in no fewer than 8 major round matches in succession.

Both South and Carlton would continue at the forefront of the game throughout the ensuing decade, with the former contesting the finals in eight out of nine possible seasons,<sup>1</sup> and the latter failing to contest the major round only once in ten years. The two sides would again contest a challenge final in 1914, with the Blues avenging their 1909 defeat with a thrilling 6 point victory, a triumph that was especially sweet given that it was the fiftieth anniversary of the club's formation. Carlton also went top in 1915, trouncing Collingwood in the challenge final by 33 points, and were runners-up twice during the decade.

South contested the premiership deciding game on three occasions between 1910 and 1919, losing to Essendon in 1912, and to Carlton as mentioned in 1914, before breaking through to claim their seventh flag in 1918 with a thrilling come from behind victory over Collingwood. At the outset of the 1920 season only Essendon, with eight premierships, had been more successful than South and Carlton,<sup>2</sup> but the remainder of the twentieth century would produce a marked discrepancy in fortune, as the Blues and Dons vied with one another, and Collingwood, for the distinction of being the VFL's most successful club, while South's supporters became increasingly used to seeing their heroes battling to achieve some kind of respectability, or at very least to avoid yet another wooden spoon.<sup>3</sup> Even more distressingly, from being one of the competition's most popular, well supported and wealthiest clubs, by the 1970s South Melbourne found itself enduring a hand to mouth existence that ultimately led to its feeling forced to relocate to Sydney in a bid to ensure its survival. Whatever the rights and wrongs of that decision, by 2005, after a somewhat hair-raising roller-coaster ride lasting a quarter of a century, the Swans once again found themselves occupying a prominent position among the game's elite clubs. As for the Bombers and the Blues, life by the early years of the twenty-first century had become a good deal less comforting and predictable, for success in top level Australian football - unlike many other major sports, most notably soccer - is, to the AFL's infinite credit, no longer entirely a purchasable commodity. Whether, in the face of mass-media and business fuelled propaganda for inferior but more easily marketable pastimes, this will ultimately be enough to ensure its long-term survival remains to be seen, but such is the seemingly all pervasive power of corporate advertising these days that one is very hard pressed indeed to feel optimistic.

## 1910

**STURT** Football Club entered the South Australian Football Association, as the competition was then known, in 1901, and finally reached a premiership play-off in their tenth season. The match was actually a challenge final, as the Blues had lost the final to Port Adelaide, but as minor premiers exercised their right to challenge the same opponents to a re-match the following week. Port Adelaide again proved successful in the second meeting of the two clubs, but the game is remembered not so much for the result as for what happened immediately afterwards. In the Sturt changing room showers an altercation broke out between ruckman **ALBERT HEINRICHS**, whom Sturt had procured from East Fremantle prior to the commencement of the season, and captain

<sup>1</sup> South Melbourne was one of five VFL clubs which did not compete in 1916.

<sup>2</sup> Geelong had also won seven senior grade flags.

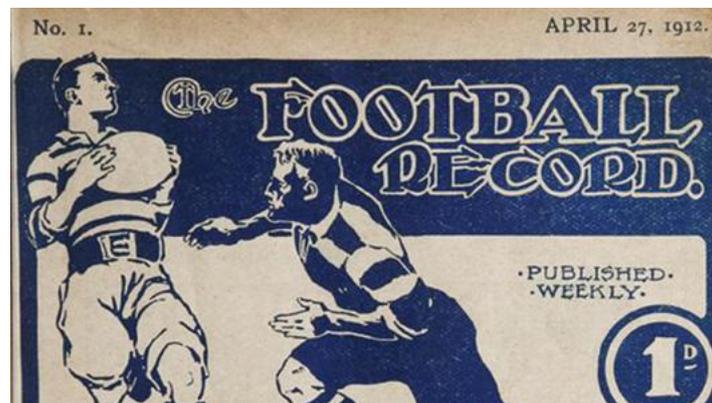
<sup>3</sup> Between 1920 and the end of the twentieth century South/Sydney succumbed to this dubious distinction on ten occasions.

**BERT RENFREY.** The disagreement quickly escalated beyond mere verbal sparring to a full-scale fist fight. Heinrich was furious at Renfrey because he alleged that his skipper had accepted a bribe to “play dead”. The fighters ended up taking their dispute outside and it culminated, with both men virtually insensible from the poundings they had received, on the banks of the river Torrens. Then, in true Edwardian fashion, the pair shook hands and affirmed their mutual “friendship”.

## 1911

In 1911 the VFL officially sanctioned a practice that had been going on surreptitiously for decades: the **PAYMENT OF PLAYERS**. The actual amount paid was a matter for negotiation between club and player, and players were perfectly at liberty to retain their amateur status if they so wished. Some indeed chose to do so. According to Follower in “The Age”:

*What the ultimate result may be remains to be seen, but it is at least gratifying to know that secretaries, treasurers and committeeman will no longer have to experience the degradation of cooking balance sheets in order to disguise the fact that they have been wilfully abrogating a rule of their own making and which they were pretending to observe.*



## 1912

The 1912 season saw the introduction by the VFL of a match day publication, **THE FOOTBALL RECORD**. The first editorial read thus:

*In producing the “Record” the proprietor approaches the task with a feeling of confidence that the public will appreciate his efforts to keep it posted with every point of interest in the football world.*

*The “Record” will fill the bill in this respect. Its news will be up-to-date, and presented in a smart, crisp fashion, that cannot fail to meet with the approbation of readers. No effort will be spared in obtaining for the general information matter of value. The chief aim will be to give our readers the very latest items of intelligence, and in all that will be published the motto of the “Record” will be observed, and that is “Fair Play is Bonnie Play”.*

*While the “Record” will be widely read on the football grounds it will possess features that will lead to the preservation of each number, and consequently the little publication will go into the home - a recommendation which of itself will appeal to advertisers.*

*A special feature of the “Record” will be the diagrams of the football field, with the picked teams for each Saturday’s match, in the positions they will occupy at the commencement of their respective games: and, in addition, photographs of leading exponents of the game will be published weekly.*

The publication continues to be published, although nowadays it is called "The AFL Record". One feels compelled to imagine that its motto, if it has one, has also changed.

The first challenge match between teams representing **NORTHERN TASMANIA** and **SOUTHERN TASMANIA** had taken place in 1883. Since then, the two sides had played one another on a more or less annual basis, and indeed in most seasons there were two matches, one in Hobart and the other in Launceston. Northern Tasmania had won its share of matches in Launceston, but never in Hobart - until this season when, on Saturday 22nd June, they triumphed by 13 points, 9.13 (67) to 7.12 (54). The two teams confronted one another for the second time in 1912 on Saturday 3rd August when north again defeated south, this time rather more comfortably, by a margin of 46 points. It goes without saying that this was the first ever instance of northern Tasmania triumphing over Southern Tasmania twice in the same season.

**PORT ADELAIDE** topped the SAFL ladder in 1912 with 12 wins from 12 matches, and then trounced West Torrens 9.16 (70) to 4.5 (29) in their semi final. However, after that the wheels fell off in quite spectacular fashion for the Magpies who lost both the final and challenge final, to which they were entitled as minor premier, against **WEST ADELAIDE**. The red and blacks had lost 5 matches during the minor round but came good when it mattered to clinch their second premiership in succession.



## 1913

The **TASMANIAN STATE PREMIERSHIP MATCH** between TFL premier Cananore and NTFA premier Launceston was sensationally cancelled after the northern club objected to the engagement of a TFL umpire - Mr Dwyer - to control the match. Launceston ended up being disqualified by the TFL, which had that right as the official, Australasian Football Council-recognised Controlling Body for all Tasmanian football. The ban was ultimately lifted before the start of the 1914 season. Meanwhile, Cananore was awarded the state title on forfeit, making it four times in five seasons that the side had won the 'double' of state and local premierships. Cananore's coach on every occasion was Bruce Carter (pictured above left), the man who had masterminded Tasmania's B Section triumph at the 1908 Melbourne Centenary Carnival.

After 11 minor round matches in 1913 **ST KILDA** stood in sixth place on the VFL ladder with 5 wins, giving them a total of 20 points, which was 10 points adrift of fourth placed **CARLTON**. Participation in the finals looked to be out of the question, and so an end of season trip to Sydney was arranged. The Saints players were obviously not keen on the idea because they proceeded to win 6 of their last 7 home and away matches to sneak into the finals 4 points ahead of Geelong and 6 clear of Carlton. Perhaps the most significant match in this winning sequence came in round fifteen against Carlton at St Kilda's home ground, the Junction Oval. Trailing by 5 points with just seconds remaining the Saints mounted one last desperate attack which culminated in Edward Collins finding Billy Schmidt (shown above right) some 50 yards from goal. Schmidt unleashed a copybook drop kick to bisect the uprights and secure victory for his side by the smallest margin.

## 1914

One of the most contentious endings to a VFL premiership decider occurred in 1914. **SOUTH MELBOURNE** and minor **CARLTON** opposed one another in the challenge final a week after South had overcome the Blues by 19 points in the final. In the first half of the re-match Carlton played strongly in the first half to forge out a 5.8 (38) to 2.5 (17) lead. Thereafter it was all South, but the forwards let the side down by kicking atrociously for goal. During the second half the red and whites booted 2.10 to 1.1, leaving the final score at Carlton 6.9 (45); South Melbourne 4.15 (39). However, every South supporter in the ground will swear blind that their team was robbed of a replay. With seconds remaining a probing kick by South Melbourne's Caldwell looked set to be marked by his team mate Bollard in the goal square, only for Carlton's Jamieson to leap into Bollard's back allowing a team mate to rush in and clear the danger. Amazingly, umpire Harry Rawle failed to spot the infringement and the bell sounded shortly afterwards with Carlton controversial victors by a single straight kick.

## 1915

On Saturday 21st August 1915 at Hobart's Upper Cricket Ground a special challenge match took place between a **TASMANIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE REPRESENTATIVE TEAM** and a combination drawn from the ranks of the **VICTORIAN IMPERIAL EXPEDITIONARY FORCE** stationed at Claremont Camp. The Expeditionary Force team comprised top level Tasmanian footballers who had enlisted. A large crowd, somewhere in the region of 5,000 people turned up, and at half time they were treated to a rousing recruitment speech by Lieutenant Robertson of the Administrative and Instructional Staff.

The match itself was of a high standard and hotly contested, with the TFL coming from behind to earn a draw, 7.15 (57) to 9.3 (57).

While Australian forces were doing battle with the Turks at Gallipoli some Australians diverted themselves by engaging in battles of a different sort on home soil. One of the most notorious examples occurred at the Melbourne Cricket Ground in front of 6,752 spectators on Saturday 7th August 1915. The combatants were members of the **MELBOURNE** and **SOUTH MELBOURNE** VFL teams which were vying for a place in the finals. South's Jim Caldwell stood out of the match as his brother had recently been killed in the Dardanelles. Every member of South Melbourne's team wore a black armband as a tribute.

At three quarter time of a tense, low scoring game both teams had posted 4.9 (33). During the last term violence erupted, as described in "The Age" of Monday 9th August 1915:

*At an exciting period of the football match between the Melbourne and South Melbourne teams on Saturday at the Melbourne cricket ground, Incigneri, one of the Melbourne players, momentarily lost control of himself, and, it is alleged, struck Payne of South Melbourne, with the result that this player was rendered unconscious. Payne, who is a big follower, had been penalised for what appeared from the press box to be a neck hold on Incigneri. The Melbourne player had turned to take his kick, when, either by accident or design, he swung round suddenly, and landed a heavy blow on Payne's chin. The incident was witnessed by many spectators. The game was certainly exciting at the time - only one point separating the teams - and Melbourne being in the lead with only five or six minutes left. Previously there had not been any display of temper, although the game was always vigorous.<sup>1</sup> Defeat for South Melbourne meant that they had no chance of gaining a place in the first four, and the sight of Payne lying prone on the ground was too much for the team's already excited supporters. They swarmed on to the ground from all quarters, and there must have been close upon 1,000 of them in the playing arena. Incigneri evidently made himself scarce, but some of the other Melbourne players were attacked, George in particular having a rough passage. The scene, for a senior football match, was probably unprecedented. For ten minutes play was out of the question. Half a dozen policemen and a few soldiers tried to restore order, but without success. Some of the players from both sides had retired into the pavilion, others wrapped in overcoats were running round to keep warm, whilst some youths, gaining possession of the ball, engaged in "practice". Eventually, Payne revived, and the umpire placed the ball in his hands for a free kick. The ground was then cleared and the game resumed.*

In the end, South Melbourne emerged victorious by 7 points, but it was Melbourne who had the last laugh as it was they rather than the southerners who went on to contest the finals. Incigneri, it emerged, had been reported by a steward.<sup>2</sup> He was found guilty and outed for eight games.



## 1916

Perhaps more than any other leading club, Collingwood has a tradition of producing full forwards of the highest quality - a tradition which originated almost a century ago with a lightweight place kicking genius whose exploits arguably did more than those of any one else to transform full forward into the glamorous, distinctive position it remains to this day. One of the first of the game's truly great full forwards, **WALTER 'DICK' LEE'S** (shown above) VFL career spanned 230

<sup>1</sup> A total of 115 free kicks were awarded during the game, more than half of which were for infringements of the holding the ball rule.

<sup>2</sup> Stewards were appointed by the VFL at this time in order to assist the central umpire and to deter rough play.

games over 17 seasons and spawned 707 goals. The last of those 707 goals came with Lee's final kick in League football, in Collingwood's losing 1922 challenge final against Fitzroy. Small (175cm) and lightweight (70kg) by the standards of modern full forwards Lee was nevertheless a commanding figure on the ground, and he was one of the most spectacular aerialists of his day. Lee's performances in 1916 were a standout feature of Collingwood's season. He topped the league goal kicking list with 48 goals, the sixth time he had achieved the distinction, and he would do so on another three occasions.

## 1917

One of the strangest football matches ever took place on the **WESTERN FRONT** in France in 1917. A team of AIF NCOs took on and defeated a team of officers 6.0 (36) to 2.2 (14). The playing field was a snow covered patch of ground within range of the German guns. The officers wore cardigans and the NCOs wore sheepskin jerkins. The centre of the playing area was littered with shell holes and there were two unexploded 5.9 shells at the bottom. At one end of the field there was a mound of earth which marked the graves of dead soldiers.

## 1918

Between 1916 and 1918 official league competition in the SAFL was suspended. Instead, a patriotic league was organised. Several SAFL clubs fielded teams in this competition, with **PORT ADELAIDE** (1916-17) and **WEST TORRENS** (1918) winning the three premierships. By 1918 the standard of football on display was as good as if not better than during pre-war days. The finals series attracted sizeable attendances and whetted people's appetites for the resumption of full scale league football in 1919.

Nevertheless, some aspects of the running of the patriotic league can perhaps best be described as haphazard. For example the first semif final between South Adelaide and Port Adelaide, scheduled to take place at Hindmarsh Oval on Saturday 21st September, descended into farce when the latter side "forgot" to turn up! Uncertain at first of what to do the umpire eventually decided to bounce the ball with just the South players on the ground. South then proceeded to kick a goal whereupon they were declared the winners. A scratch match then took place for the benefit of the large crowd which had assembled.

On the following Monday the league overruled the match umpire's decision to award the match to South and ordered that the semi final be played on the following Saturday with the West Torrens-West Adelaide semi final, which had originally been scheduled for that date, being put back a week.

## 1919

Between 25th July 1914 and 6th September 1919 **NORTH MELBOURNE** won 49 consecutive VFA matches, which is easily a record. They also won premierships in 1914, 1915 and 1918, which technically constituted three flags in succession as the VFA was in recess in 1916 and 1917. In both 1913 and 1919 North finished in second place.

As North Melbourne's star was fading Footscray's was in the ascendant. The Tricolours won the flag in both 1919 and 1920, were runners-up in 1921 and 1922, and then won another brace of flags in 1923 and 1923. Their run of success might well have lasted even longer but in 1925 Footscray were admitted to the VFL.



## 1920

The 1920 Elmore Football Association challenge final between **ELMORE** and **COLBINABBIN** was noteworthy for the number of “ring ins” fielded by both sides. Fourteen members of Elmore’s team were “borrowed” for the day, including Roy Cazaly (shown above), Wells Eicke and Billy Schmidt (St Kilda), Bob Doherty, Mark Tandy and Archie Wood (South Melbourne), and George Ogilvie (Richmond). Not to be outdone, Colbinabbin also found places for a large number of “recruits” in their side, notably Paddy Doolan (Richmond) and Arthur Fehring, Charlie Fehring, Greg Stockdale and Leo Stockdale (Essendon). Elmore won fairly comfortably.

The ninth round VFL match between **RICHMOND** and **ESSENDON** at Punt Road saw the greatest comeback of the 1920 VFL season. Home side Richmond trailed at quarter time by 31 points, half time by 15 points, and by a daunting 35 points at the last change. In the final term, however, the Tigers played all over the Dons, adding 8.7 to nil to win with some comfort by 20 points, 13.17 (95) to 11.9 (75). Richmond went on to win the premiership in 1920, while Essendon failed to qualify for the finals, ending up in sixth place.

Prior to the first world war the **GOLDFIELDS FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION** had been a voting member of the Australasian Football Council, a status reinforced by the selection in Western Australia’s 1908, 1911 and 1914 carnival teams of Goldfields-based footballers. After the war, however, the GFA’s affiliation with the AFC was revoked, and so an agreement was brokered with the **VICTORIAN FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION**, which was another prestigious body left out in the cold by the AFC. The principal purpose agreement of the agreement was to facilitate the transfer of players between the two organisations. It was also intended that matches between teams representative of the two bodies should be played annually, and the first such games took place in 1920 on the Goldfield. The results were: GAME ONE - GFA 9.14 (68) defeated VFA 6.18 (54); GAME TWO - GFA 9.11 (63) drew with VFA 9.11 (63); GAME THREE - GFA 11.6 (72) defeated VFA 6.17 (53).

## 1921

**WEST ADELAIDE** Football Club undertook an eastern states tour in 1921 during which matches were played against both **QUEENSLAND** and **NEW SOUTH WALES** representative sides. West, who finished second from bottom in the SAFL this season, defeated Queensland in Brisbane 18.20 (128) to 10.18 (78), and overcame New South Wales in Sydney 12.24 (96) to 11.5 (71).

With **WILLIAMSTOWN** leading **FOOTSCRAY** by 4 points halfway through the third quarter of the 1921 **VFA FINAL** a massive hailstorm broke out. Within a matter of minutes the entire ground was covered in hail stones, some of which were as large as a two shilling piece. Football was clearly impossible in the circumstances, and the match was abandoned. When the match was replayed a week later Footscray emerged victorious, but Williamstown had finished top of the ladder after the minor round, and therefore had the right of challenge. This was duly invoked, with the Villagers accounting for the Tricolours by three goals.

Round seven of the 1921 VFL home and away series saw **RICHMOND** at home to **ESSENDON**. The Tigers trailed at the main interval by 15 points before making strenuous efforts to turn things around in the third term. These efforts were assisted by a larrikin in the outer, and field umpire Wilkinson. The larrikin got hold of the ball after it landed in the crowd, and punctured it before returning it to the field of play. Essendon full back Bert Day tossed the ball to umpire Williamson so that it could be inspected. To everyone's surprise, Richmond full forward George Bayliss ran in, collected the ball and kicked a goal. Even more surprisingly, the umpire called it "all clear" and the goal was allowed to stand. By three quarter time Richmond had taken the lead by 18 points. The Tigers eventually won 12.14 (86) to 10.11 (71).

## 1922

The **TASMANIAN FOOTBALL LEAGUE** selected representative teams to face three different mainland club sides in 1922. **GLENELG**, which had yet to win a single match after one and a half seasons in the SAFL, was defeated by 14 points, 14.9 (93) to 10.19 (79). Fellow SAFL club **SOUTH ADELAIDE** provided somewhat sterner opposition, winning 12.9 (81) to 8.13 (61). The TFL's most impressive performance came against **RICHMOND**, which was the reigning VFL premier. Visiting VFL clubs typically won by massive margins against the TFL without really trying, but Richmond found themselves facing a real battle from which they only just managed to emerge victorious. Final scores were Richmond 10.9 (69) defeated TFL 9.12 (66).

**PORT MELBOURNE'S** 1922 VFA premiership triumph was both exciting and controversial. The Borough came from behind late on to defeat their opponents in the decisive match of the year, **FOOTSCRAY**, by 2 points. So much for the excitement. The controversy arose after the match when three Port players, Bill Walton, Gus Dobrigh and Bill Rudd claimed that they had been offered amounts ranging between £40 and £50 to "play dead". Moreover, another Port Melbourne player, George Ogilvie, claimed that during the match he was offered a £20 bribe by a Footscray player. An extended VFA investigation followed, as a result of which Footscray's Vern Banbury, was disqualified for life.

## 1923

**EAST PERTH'S** post world war one combination was without doubt one of the greatest in the history of the game. The Royals won every premiership between 1919 and 1923, having finished second in 1918. Their five year sequence of success involved a total of 104 games, 76 of which were won. One of East Perth's 28 losses came not on the field of play but at the whim of league administrators. Between 1919 and 1923 the Royals engaged in 13 finals matches, winning all but 3.