

Magpie



THE DANE EVENT

FOOTBALL'S most appetizing on-ball match-up is a distinct possibility when Collingwood and Geelong play on Saturday night.

Dane Swan and Gary Ablett going head-to-head is about as good as it gets, and based on previous matches is likely to happen for at least some of this top-of-the-table clash.

It says plenty about Swan's 2010 form that who will tag him is a bigger question than who the Magpies will send to Ablett.

Last time they met Sharrod Wellingham, now out through injury, ran with Ablett while Swan had a succession of opponents, including Joel Selwood, Jimmy Bartel, Cameron Ling, Darren Milburn and Andrew Mackie.

PLAN A

A shootout between Swan and Ablett. If that happens then each club is banking on their player being the more damaging. Based on their Round 9 match this season, Geelong would be happy enough with that, although Swan has lifted his rating considerably since then.

Yes, Ablett has recently spent more time up forward but many of his 32 goals have

been scored while on the ball. If he goes forward, would Swan go with him?

Maybe Geelong doesn't fear Swan as much as some others given his career average against the Cats is down compared to that against most other clubs. Alternatively, Ablett has reserved some of his best football for the Magpies.

ROUND 9

Ablett 15 kicks, 17 handballs
Total: 32, one goal, 3 tackles

Swan 14 kicks, 11 handballs,
Total: 25, one goal, four tackles

PLAN B

If Swan's possessions start to hurt, and you have to accept he will always get plenty of disposals, then a harder tag might be applied. The issue is, very few players can stay with Swan or match his work rate.

Should Geelong go with a hard tag, and as expected Cameron Ling runs with Scott Pendlebury, then Corey Enright might be the man to go to Swan.

Enright did a good job on St Kilda's free-running Leigh Montagna in last year's Grand Final.

THE TACKLE

Here's the best of Robbo's online column



The champs v the challengers. Malthouse v Thompson. Cats v Pies. Collingwood has been magnificent in its preparation. Their press is the best we've seen, they run, they spread, they tackle, they share, they attack, they defend and they do it with speed.

Geelong has been, well, Geelong. Their strength is belief and commitment to the cause. They created the word "turnover" and play blitzkrieg footy. They are No. 1 and have the pennants to prove it. They are two crack teams with contrasting styles. One kicks the footy (Collingwood) and one handballs a lot (Geelong). One plays the corridor (Geelong) and one plays the boundary (Collingwood).

The difference last time (Round 9) was 36 points, but the Pies were dominating the game 10 minutes into the last quarter. They couldn't kick goals, however. Pressure does that to the Pies. They choke, just a touch.

THINGS I THINK I LIKE

Leon Davis
Neon is getting hold of loose balls and, when he's at his best, loose men. His chase down of Kade Simpson in the third quarter, when the score was 79-19, indicates his hunger is returning. Now for September.

Justin Westhoff
Is there a more complex player in the game? One week he seems disinterested, the next he is playing like Adam Goodes.

THINGS I THINK I DON'T LIKE

Carlton.
Where do you start? Brett Ratten rattled off plenty of negatives on the weekend, only stopping a fraction short of "soft", perhaps the most damning criticism anyone could level at a football club. They need toughness, confidence, bigger bodies, a key back, a key forward and . . . and . . . and . . . no, not a new coach. Not even Norm Smith could make this team competitive at the moment.

The Ox
Another modern-day miracle. Has any player, current or retired, ever received more attention than David Schwarz for having such a beautiful wife? The photographs in the *Herald Sun* last week would suggest not. It's understood the Ox has been contacted by VB to carry the banner in their next advertisement. Seriously.

HAVE YOUR SAY

Blog live with Robbo from noon today



You pick Lockett, I say Ablett

Mike Sheahan

FOOTBALL followers can't separate Tony Lockett and Gary Ablett Sr as the next great to be immortalised in bronze at the MCG.

Saturday's *Herald Sun* article calling for a resumption of the Melbourne Cricket Club's "Parade of Champions" program drew almost 7000 respondents, with Lockett finishing ever-so-narrowly in front.

They were a long way clear of three other possible statue subjects, Richmond's greatest player and parade nominee Kevin Bartlett, and two more-recent champions, Jason Dunstall and Wayne Carey.

Lockett, the former St Kilda and Sydney champion, remains the highest goalkicker in AFL history with 1360.

Ablett, the former Geelong champ, kicked 1030 goals, yet might have been the most dominant figure to play at the MCG, certainly in the modern era. He kicked 291 goals there at an average of 5.3 a game, including nine in Geelong's losing 1989 Grand Final team.

The "Parade of Champions" has been on hold since it was extended to 10 sporting greats in 2006. They include four footballers — Haydn Bunton, Dick Reynolds, Ron Barassi and Leigh Matthews.

MCC chief executive Stephen Gough said on Friday that funding was the stumbling block, explaining that Tattersall's provided \$1 million for the 10 statues erected from 2003-06.

AFL chief executive Andrew Demetriou yesterday scoffed at funding as an excuse, but

THE NEXT CHAMPION?

The results so far

Tony Lockett	33.01%	(2242 votes)
Gary Ablett	32.2%	(2187)
Kevin Bartlett	14.73%	(1000)
Jason Dunstall	10.4%	(706)
Wayne Carey	9.66%	(656)
Total votes:	6791	

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said he would contact Gough about reviving the program.

"I think it's a worthwhile program," he said. "I find it hard to believe that money is the problem."

(The MCC generated revenue totalling \$112,083,000 in the financial year 2009-10.)

"I will be asking Stephen if there's anything we can do to get something done jointly; I think it's a good thing.

"It would be disappointing if it didn't continue."

My view is Ablett should get the nod as the next addition from football, and soon.

Cricket's Shane Warne is an outstanding candidate, but why does there need to be just one? After all, there hasn't been any for four years.

The selection criteria attaches considerable weight to contributions at the MCG, which gives Ablett the edge over Lockett, best remembered at the ground for six goals for Sydney in the 1996 Grand Final.

Hawks consider fighting Rioli ban

Bruce Matthews

clash with Salter in the third quarter at AAMI Stadium.

Hawk ruckman Brent Renouf must pay \$2100 for his second melee conviction, while teammates Jarryd Roughead, Brad Sewell, Chance Bateman, Rioli and Port Adelaide's Dean Brogan, Paul Stewart, Robbie Gray and Salter can each accept \$1200 penalties.

Injured Brisbane Lions forward Brendan Fevola's painful weekend just got worse after he received a \$4000 fine, with a \$1000 discount if he pleads guilty to a misconduct charge.

Fevola was cited for his headlock on Melbourne backman Colin Garland in the first term at the Gabba after the match review panel ordered an investigation into the incident.

The panel can impose a fine for misconduct not classified in the table of offences and it took into account a Demons' medical report that said Garland was not injured.

The AFL coffers were boosted by another \$3600 after fines were imposed on two Fremantle and two West Coast players for wrestling.

And St Kilda's Sean Dempster can accept a \$900 fine for colliding with a field umpire.

Youngsters need belief

THIS is a no-brainer.

The only question which remains about this excitement machine that Collingwood has become is whether it can replicate it on the big stage.

We're not talking about playing in front of massive crowds — the Magpies do that every week — but being able to do it well against the very, very best going around.

Two flags from three consecutive Grand Finals and a host of massive home-and-away games gives the Cats hierarchy confidence about how their players react under extreme pressure.

Mick Malthouse can't say the same thing about his team.

He would have great confidence in his players given what they've displayed this year but there are some questions.

How is Jarryd Blair going to cope?
Will Ben Reid continue to stand up?
Can Brent Macaffer have an impact?
Is Tyson Goldsack for real this time?
Can Chris Dawes beat Matthew Scarlett?
Will Leigh Brown deliver again?
Can Leon Davis do it against the elite?



Mark Thompson has seen his lesser names produce when it matters. Remember Shannon Byrnes and Travis Varcoe in the final quarter of last year's Grand Final.

What Saturday night offers for the Cats is a perfect opportunity to gauge where they are at and what needs improving.

Thompson won't bat an eyelid should his team go down as to him it is very much only Round 19 and another four points.

Collingwood needs to win for its belief. It is 0-3 against the Cats since 2008 with an average losing margin of 45 points.

If that isn't addressed, it suddenly starts to look a lot like a monkey on the back.

That's not something you want to be carrying around when things get serious next month.