

# Courageous Tigers edge out Redlegs

By PAUL DOWLING

Glenelg last night unearthed new levels of courage to beat Norwood and give Mark Williams his most satisfying win as a coach in a dramatic opening to the SANFL season at Football Park.

"That was something I haven't seen at this club before," Williams said after the 13.18 (96) to 13.16 (94) win. "The persistence was great."

Trailing by 16 points midway through the final term and, not for the first time in the game, seemingly beaten, desperate Glenelg pushed inexorably forward to whittle away the deficit.

Strangely, it was two players who had struggled to impact the game for most of the night who hauled Glenelg back into the game. First Allan Bartlett snapped truly from 15 metres to give the Tigers hope and when Campbell Flower rescued a personally forgettable night by marking and steering through a stunning 50 metre goal from deep in a forward pocket, Glenelg had levelled the scores.

● PAGE 31: Blues must hurt when they lose, says Bunton; Tougher Roosters ready to sock it to their critics

Behinds in time-on to Darren Mansell and Craig McRae completed the remarkable recovery.

"Our errors and their persistence," was how bitterly disappointed Norwood coach Neil Craig summed up the result. "There were no good signs for the Norwood Football Club tonight."

At several stages during the first half Norwood seemed set to put the game away but a poor conversion rate in the second quarter kept Glenelg in the game.

So, too, did the introduction of Simon Cox, last year's All-Australian Commonwealth Bank Cup player, for his league debut.

Cox, a tall, mobile forward with what Williams describes as a "smart head", ignited Glenelg with strong marking and incisive handball that set up one goal and earned another for himself.

Just as significantly, he forced Norwood half-back Scott Burns, who appears to have gained an

extra yard of pace over the summer, to man up and sacrifice some of the rebound that had netted him two goals and continually driven Norwood forward. Cox remained a focal point for most of the match and if last night's performance was any indication, he will be among the top few players chosen in the AFL draft at the end of the season.

Cox was not alone in his decisive display. Wingmen Simon Hele and Craig McRae provided a constant link for the Tigers across centre, collecting 36 kicks and 22 handballs between them.

Darren Mansell worked tirelessly as a follower as did Dean Bailey in the centre and Hamish Stuart and Lynden Bow across half-back.

Norwood's Crows' contingent of Stephen Rowe and Jonathon Ross was damaging, particularly in the first half, and along with ruckman Craig Balme, Eagles recruit Todd Davey and his roving partner Stephen Patterson, looked like doing enough to earn Norwood a win. But, ultimately, there were too few consistent contributors for the 'Legs.

On a night when neither side could find a winning forward, it was left to the on-ballers and the wingmen to score the goals. Glenelg's Phil McGuinness looked to be travelling five yards faster than the other 35 players on the field in the first six minutes, swooping on loose balls to kick three quick goals.

But Norwood absorbed the initial pressure to race to a quarter-time lead and early in the second term appeared capable of killing the game by half-time.

But enter Glenelg's persistence. It forged back to be within four points at half-time, marginally outscored Norwood in the third quarter and recorded an astonishing win with a last quarter to remember. Williams, while delighted with the triumph, already had turned his attention to next week's game against the Eagles, also on Friday, under lights at headquarters. "They're the trendsetters in this league. That's the game we're thinking about now," he said.

|         |     |     |       |       |      |
|---------|-----|-----|-------|-------|------|
| GLENELG | 3.5 | 7.8 | 11.12 | 13.18 | (96) |
| NORWOOD | 5.0 | 8.6 | 11.12 | 13.16 | (94) |

**BEST** - Glenelg: McRae, Bow, Mansell, Cox, Hele, McGuinness, Stuart, Bailey. Norwood: Burns, Rowe, Balme, Ross, Patterson.

**GOALS** - Glenelg: McGuinness 3.1, West 2.2, Cox 2.1, Bartlett 2.0, McRae 1.3, Barton 1.2, Flower 1.1, McNamara 1.0, Mansell, Hele, Caldwell 0.1, rushed 0.5. Norwood: Patterson 2.2, Prime 2.1, Rowe, Burns 2.0, Pierri, Fleming 1.1, Davey, Pitt, Russell 1.0, Modra, D'Antiochia 0.1, rushed 0.9.

**UMPIRES** - Michael Abbott and Gary Wyld.

**CROWD** - 6068.

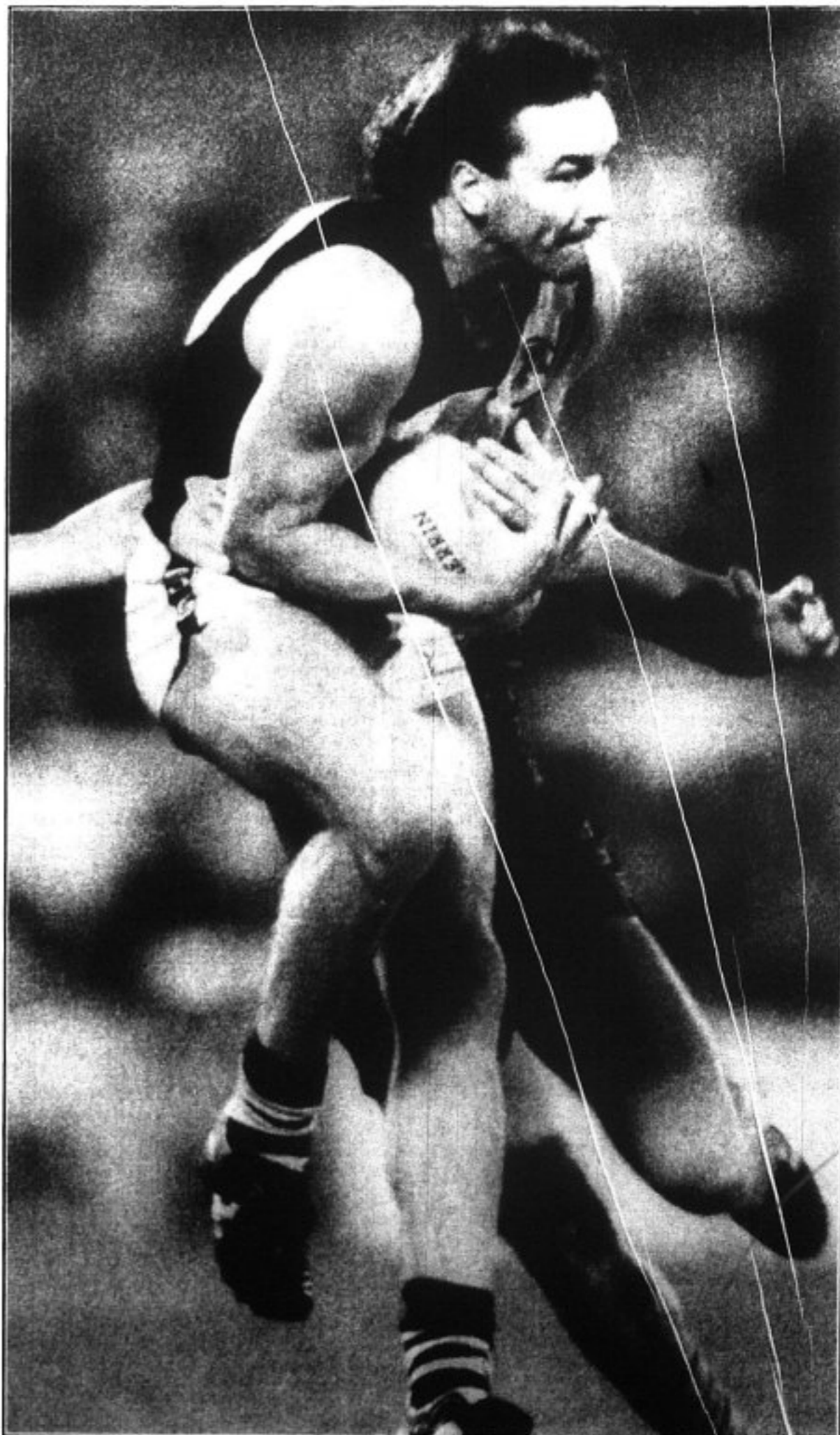
**TURNING POINT:** The introduction of debutant Simon Cox from the interchange bench early in the second quarter. Cox displayed skill and poise beyond his years and helped arrest a Norwood charge that could have given it a match-winning lead at half-time.



Best on ground  
Craig McRae  
(Glenelg)



Top team man  
Darren Mansell  
(Glenelg)



OUT IN FRONT ... Glenelg's Jim West marks safely during last night's SANFL opener against Norwood at Football Park. Picture: RAY TITUS.