

Sturt's new hard edge in Norman conquest

BLUES v TIGERS

Preliminary final AAMI Stadium Crowd 8184

| | | | | | |
|---------|-----|-----|------|------|----|
| Sturt | 0.0 | 5.2 | 8.5 | 9.6 | 60 |
| Glenelg | 2.3 | 4.7 | 6.10 | 7.13 | 55 |

BEST: Sturt: Trengove, Sheedy, Jaensch, Bowen, Coad, Bode, McGlone. Glenelg: Sellar, Fisher, Murphy, Kane, Adlington, Cranston.

GOALS: Sturt: Jaensch 3.0, Sheedy 2.1, Coad 2.0, Bode, Johncock 1.1, Crane, Herring 0.1, rushed 0.1. Glenelg: Murphy, Kirkby, McGregor, Button 1.1, Fisher, Block, Adlington 1.0, Grima 0.4, Backwell, Cranston, Ruwoldt 0.1, rushed 0.2.

INJURIES: Sturt: Thurstan (knee), McLeay (thigh). Glenelg: Mules (ankle), withdrew from selected side.

Umpires: R. Williams, T. Dey, C. Rowston/G. Fila.

Isn't it grand for the Blues?

WARREN PARTLAND

YES Luke Norman, Sturt has blown away its "soft" finals tag.

When the Double Blues lost the qualifying final to Central District by just six points two weeks back, Sturt coach Norman suggested his side had surely shown it was capable of finals-tough football.

Now no-one can argue with him. Sturt, spirited and desperate, stood up to be counted in the heat of battle to conquer its modern-day nemesis Glenelg by five points in an enthralling preliminary final at AAMI Stadium yesterday.

Not since round two, 2007 had the Double Blues beaten Glenelg. That was nine successive losses.

It was not pretty and at times they seemingly lacked belief. But heart and a will to win has carried the Double Blues into the grand final and a date with the Bulldogs.

"Everyone talks about us being one-dimensional and soft," Norman said. "That has all gone out the door."

"The work this group has done to make this happen has been phenomenal and it has paid off. There is a lot of heart in this group."

"We put the picture on the back page of the paper of Nick Rieworldt and Justin Koschitzke in the rooms and spoke about the pain... so we don't end up like that."

"Words can't describe how proud I am. We ask so much of them all year and they keep giving and giving."

Sturt went into the contest without its No. 1 ruckman Angus Kurtze, while the Tigers were missing inspirational skipper Ben Mules after he failed a fitness test on his injured ankle.

Glenelg will rue wasted opportunities, especially in the first quarter when it smashed the Double Blues but had just 2.3 to show for its dominance at the first change. The inside 50 count was an incredible 16-3 in favour of the Tigers at quarter-time.

Sturt's skills were woeful, it fumbled and bumbled on the back of a lack of confidence and it took 15 minutes to invade its attacking 50.

Its struggle was evident on the scoreboard when it entered the second term without a point.

The Tigers were made to pay a heavy price for their inability to capitalise on their avalanche of chances.

Michael Coad nailed a goal just a minute into the second quarter and when captain Jade Sheedy bagged his second for the term the scores were level midway through the quarter.

Sturt kicked five goals from just 13 visits inside 50, stark contrast to Glenelg's conversion rate.

Coad kicked a 55m bomb eight minutes into the third term to regain the lead but Sturt's momentum was halted by the loss of Toby Thurstans, carried from the field with a knee injury.

Thurstans bravely returned to the action at the start of the final quarter, starting in attack before being moved back to defence.

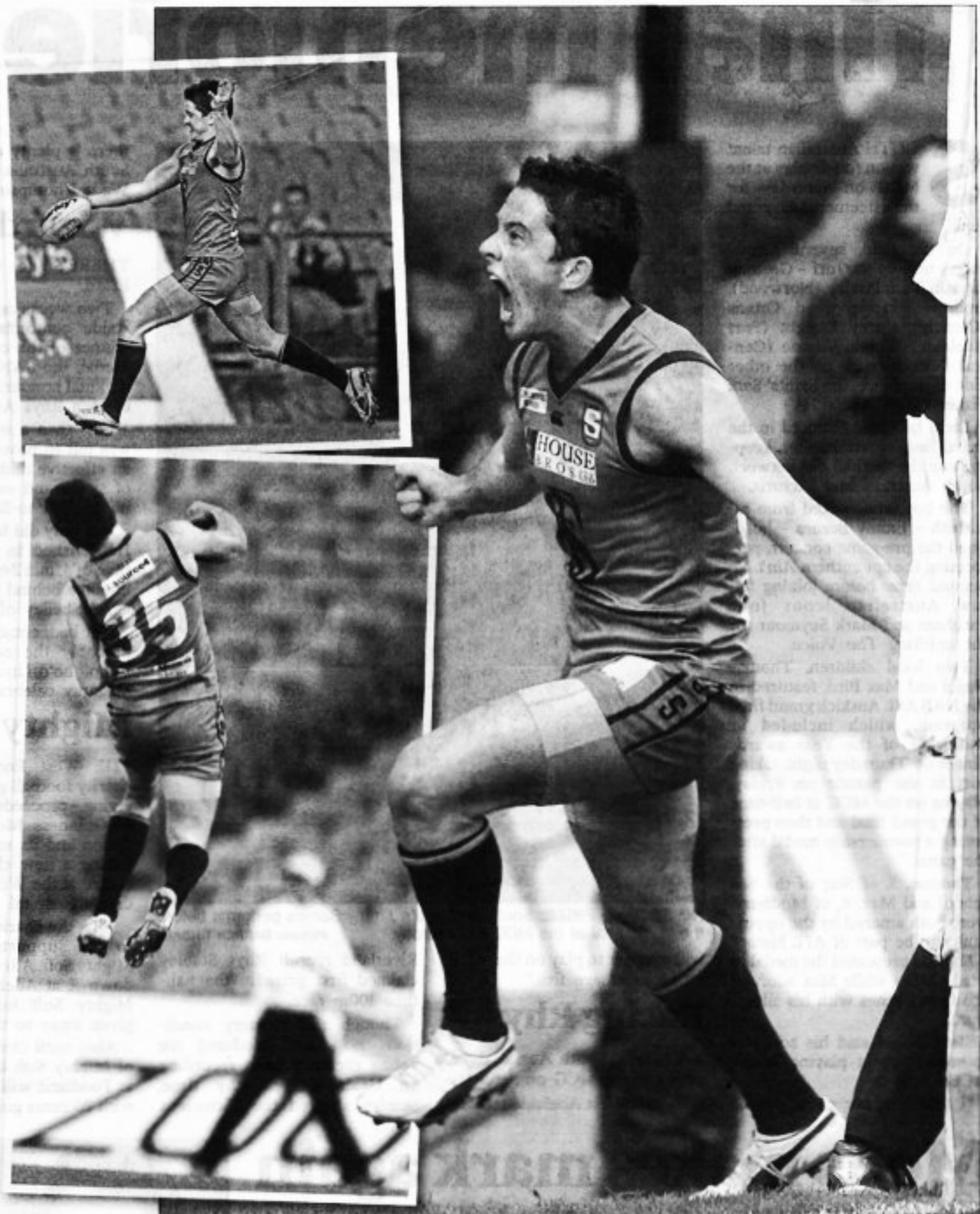
The final quarter was a slog. Glenelg's James Sellar got on top at the stoppages and gave his side plenty of go-forward. However, his teammates, as has been the situation in the finals, let too many chances slip.

That kid Jack Trengove, how good is he? The AFL recruiting teams would have been salivating. The 18-year old was everywhere. And amid the pressure and tension of the dying minutes, he was the coolest player on the park. He was a courageous hero.

Glenelg coach Mark Mickan was, by his own admission, gutted his side had dropped out of the race for the title with two finals losses after finishing minor premier. "Everyone is gutted and we feel we underachieved, no doubt about that," Mickan said.

"I don't think it was a wasted year - so much effort went into it."

"We had opportunities all day. Kicking 7.13 is not going to win too many games."



YOU BEAUTY: Sturt's Matthew Jaensch kicks the winning goal in yesterday's preliminary final and enjoys the moment. Pictures: RAY TITUS

| STURT | | | | | | | | | | | GLENELG | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|--|---------------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--|--|
| Kicks | Mks | Hbl | F/for | F/og | Gls | Pts | H/O | Tkl | | | Kicks | Mks | Hbl | F/for | F/og | Gls | Pts | H/O | Tkl | | | |
| BODE | 11 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | | | ADLINGTON | 3 | - | 7 | 2 | - | 1 | - | 3 | | | |
| BOWEN | 8 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 1 | - | - | 32 | 2 | | ALLEN | 3 | - | 8 | 2 | 1 | - | - | 9 | | | |
| BRATTON | 5 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 2 | - | - | - | 3 | | BACKWELL | 7 | - | 4 | 1 | 2 | - | 1 | - | 5 | | |
| COAD | 13 | 8 | 1 | - | - | 2 | - | 4 | 5 | | BLOCK | 12 | 2 | 7 | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | 9 | | |
| CRANE | 11 | 3 | 8 | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | - | 6 | | BUTTON | 7 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | | |
| CUBILLO | 3 | 2 | 8 | - | - | - | - | 1 | 2 | | CRANSTON | 2 | 1 | 7 | - | 3 | - | 1 | 24 | 2 | | |
| EVANS | 7 | 7 | 3 | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | | FISHER | 13 | 1 | 11 | 2 | 2 | 1 | - | 7 | | | |
| FITTOCK | 6 | 3 | 8 | 2 | - | - | - | 1 | 3 | | GRIMA | 8 | 3 | 8 | 2 | - | - | 4 | 3 | 1 | | |
| GUM | 9 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 2 | - | - | 3 | 1 | | HALL | 3 | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 3 | | |
| HERRING | 1 | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | 2 | | KANE | 13 | 3 | 6 | 3 | - | - | - | - | 4 | | |
| JAENSCH | 10 | 5 | 7 | - | 2 | 3 | - | - | 3 | | KELLOCK | 8 | 2 | 5 | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | | |
| JOHNSON | 4 | 2 | 5 | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | | KIRK | 2 | - | 5 | - | - | - | - | 2 | - | | |
| McGLONE | 13 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1 | - | - | - | 2 | | KIRKBY | 3 | 2 | - | - | - | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | | |
| McLEAY | 5 | 2 | 4 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | | McGREGOR | 4 | 1 | 1 | - | - | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | | |
| NELSON | 4 | 2 | 5 | - | - | - | - | - | 5 | | MEYER | 5 | - | 3 | - | 1 | - | - | - | 4 | | |
| PAYNE | 8 | 2 | 6 | - | 4 | - | - | - | 3 | | MILLS | 6 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | 2 | | |
| PLANT | 1 | 1 | 8 | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | | MURPHY | 12 | 3 | 9 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | - | 8 | | |
| SHEEDY | 19 | 8 | 11 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | - | 7 | | PANOZZO | 10 | - | 7 | - | - | - | - | - | 2 | | |
| THURSTANS | 6 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 1 | - | - | 5 | 4 | | RUWOLDT | 10 | - | 2 | 1 | 1 | - | 1 | - | 6 | | |
| TRENGOVE | 16 | 8 | 13 | - | 2 | - | - | - | 3 | | SELLAR | 3 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 1 | - | - | 30 | 3 | | |
| WARK | 5 | 4 | 4 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | | WILLOUGHBY | 6 | 2 | 6 | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | | |
| Totals | 165 | 78 | 116 | 18 | 22 | 9 | 6 | 50 | 62 | | Totals | 140 | 31 | 112 | 22 | 18 | 7 | 13 | 66 | 70 | | |

SANFL DETAILS

DRAW

Sunday, October 4
Grand final: Central v Sturt (AAMI Stadium, 3.10pm).

LEADING GOALKICKERS

| | Yest | Total |
|----------------------|------|-------|
| B. Chambers (Sturt) | - | 80.46 |
| B. Warren (Panthers) | - | 47.17 |
| N. Salter (Eagles) | - | 45.21 |
| J. Perry (Port) | - | 43.17 |
| R. Kirkby (Glenelg) | 1.1 | 41.24 |
| S. Rowe (Norwood) | - | 40.18 |
| R. Herring (Sturt) | 0.1 | 33.29 |

RESERVES

| | 8.4 | 11.7 | 13.8 | 16.10 | (106) |
|---------------------------|-----|------|------|-------|-------|
| Preliminary final Glenelg | | | | | |
| Central | 2.2 | 5.4 | 10.7 | 14.9 | (93) |

BEST - Glenelg: Duldig, C. Kane, Pekin, Lally, Hinge, Grima.

Central: M. Westhoff, White, Nason, Menzel, Allocca, Barmby.

GOALS - Glenelg: Duldig 7, Grima 2, Couch, Day, Hinge, Hitchcock, C. Kane, O'Grady, Snook. **Central:** Nason 4, M. Westhoff, Menzel 3, Frail, Dunne, Allocca, Matson.

Grand final - Eagles v Glenelg, AAMI Stadium, Sunday noon.

UNDER-18

Preliminary final

| | 2.3 | 3.6 | 6.8 | 8.12 | (60) |
|--------------|-----|-----|------|------|------|
| Port Magpies | | | | | |
| Sturt | 2.2 | 4.7 | 6.10 | 6.14 | (50) |

BEST - Port: Stringer, Lindsay, Long, Robertson, Crettenden, Hoskin, Perry, Hand. **Sturt:** Fotheringham, Greenslade, A. Wilson, Stephens, Johnston, Ellis.

GOALS - Port: Stringer, Solly, Long 2, Robertson, Milera. **Sturt:** Hughes, J. O'Sullivan 2, Shearwood, Day.

Grand final - Glenelg v Port Adelaide, AAMI Stadium, Sunday 9.05pm.

DRAFT TARGET | He has bigger things ahead, says Sturt coach

Jack stamps his AFL class on classic

CANDICE KELLER

THIS week Jack Trengove could have been making his mark on AFL selectors at the NAB Draft Camp.

Instead he will be training with Sturt in preparation for Sunday's grand final clash with Central District and hoping his performances at AAMI Stadium over the past month have been enough to catch the eye of a national league club.

A tireless worker, unwavering tough nut and creative midfielder, Trengove, 18, has demonstrated maturity beyond his years since debuting with the Double Blues in July.

Now he has the chance to claim the trifecta of premiership medals after winning flags with Sturt under-17s in 2007 and the reserves last year. It is a prospect that excites Trengove but is by no means a challenge he will underestimate.

"I'm pretty excited. You always hear Ben Nelson and Jade Sheedy say how much (the premiership) means to them. I'm pretty lucky to have that chance in my first year," Trengove said.

"Hopefully I'll just get the body right and make sure we're cherry ripe for the game. We'll probably go into it just like we did (yesterday) and hopefully we'll get the same result."

As for the draft, Trengove is happy to leave that to fate for now, as he remains focused

on Sunday's big game. Tipped to be picked up in the first round of the draft - if not in the first three picks - there has been a lot of pressure on Trengove to outshine his peers on the field.

The SA under-18 captain has managed that effortlessly but mixing it with the men on grand final day is his main goal.

"I'm definitely going to stay here and train with the boys for the grand final. It's not a bad excuse to miss the draft camp to play in a league grand final, so I'm really pumped," he said. "My first game I was pretty intimidated by the physicality of the game but each game I've just been getting better and more used to it. Now I'm looking forward to next weekend.

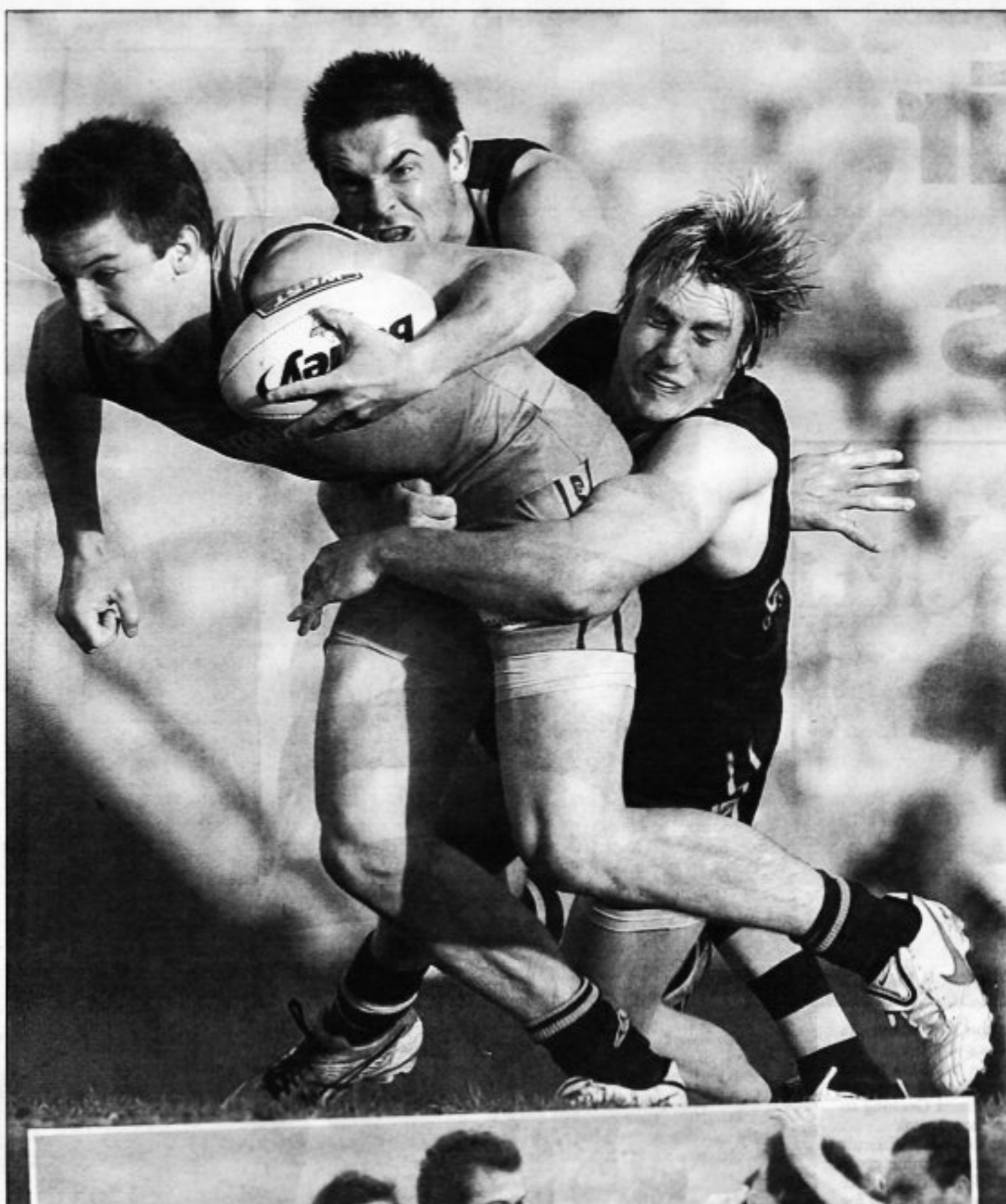
"I was pretty nervous coming into (the preliminary). I knew it was going to be pretty intense and be a hard slog but it was good to get through with a win."

Sturt coach Luke Norman is Trengove's No. 1 fan.

Astounded by his composure under pressure and sharp skills, Norman said Trengove has a bright future ahead. Good for him, not so good for Sturt.

"Jack's got some real class. He understands the game and he's not scared," Norman said.

"He's got bigger things going on from the end of this year but hopefully he can get away with a premiership."



THE SKY'S THE LIMIT: Sturt young gun Jack Trengove gets out of trouble despite a strong tackle from Tiger Ben Kane and celebrates with team-mates Michael Bratton and Craig Evans after the Blues' stunning five-point preliminary final win. Pictures: RAY TITUS

Everyone will take the fall: Mules

ZAC MILBANK

GLENELG captain Ben Mules was so numb after the siren he was lost for words.

"It hasn't sunk in yet. We weren't prepared to go out this week, so I'm really speechless," Mules said. "You don't plan to go out in straight sets but it's just something we're going to have to cop as a team."

But the Tigers' captain courageous - agonisingly forced to sit in the stands as his side lost to Sturt by five points in yesterday's preliminary final - was adamant about one thing.

"We had a short chat about it and it just becomes unfinished business now," Mules said steadfastly.

"I think this group is too good and the club is too strong to let this get the better of us."

What must change at Brighton Rd is the Bays' accuracy in front of goal. All season it has been an issue but hidden by not losing a minor round game after Anzac Day.

When it mattered most, the Tigers couldn't finish in front of the big sticks despite having more than enough chances to win the second semi-final and yesterday's sudden-death encounter.

"You can't hide away from the fact we have lost two finals by not kicking enough goals," Mules said.

"The easiest thing for us to do is to make excuses about it and start finger-pointing but Glenelg is not going to do that. Everyone will be taking the fall."

Mules, who had played every game this season until yesterday, described sitting in the grandstands as the hardest thing he has had to do. After guiding his team to victory so often in 2009, the resolute half-back was left idle on the sidelines with an ankle injury which forced him to withdraw from the Tigers' 21.

"It was so hard sitting back and watching the game unfold without having any physical input into what happens," Mules said.

"It's just unbelievably tough."

Having copped the injury in the Tigers' second semi-final defeat, Mules did little training through the week in an attempt to play but failed his fitness test on Saturday.

"I was pushing to play," Mules said.

"It just wasn't right at all but I was hoping it was going to be okay for next week. But now it will just be one of those things you will never know about."

SHATTERED

HEARTBREAKER:
Glenelg player Mark
Ruwoldt after the
loss to Sturt on
Sunday. Picture:
Stephen Laffer



By David Goldsmith

THIS wasn't the way it was supposed to end.

Tiger fans sat in stunned disbelief – some with tears rolling down their cheeks – staring into AAMI Stadium emptiness as players who had given their all during the previous 120 minutes lay prone on the turf,

wondering where their season went. After finishing the minor round clear in top spot, the Bays were set to cruise into the 2009 SANFL Grand Final – and then go on to make up for last year's heartbreaking loss by muzzling the Bulldogs.

Bays CEO Steven Barratt has promised a comprehensive post-season review in the wake of another

major round fade-out. "Our under-18s and Reserves are still playing in the grand final (this Sunday) so we won't do anything this week and just let the dust settle," he said.

"But we will do a review and this season it needs to be a more critical review because in the last two (finals) campaigns we've fallen short of expectations."

Having held Sturt scoreless in the first quarter of the preliminary final last Sunday, the Bays squandered a handful of gilt-edged chances to take control of an intense battle. In a desperate final term, they eventually fell short by five points, 7.13 (55) to 9.6 (60).

■ Continued, Pages 4 & 5

What a waste Tigers



UNDER THE PUMP: Brett Backwell tries to get around Ben Nelson during Sunday's preliminary final at AAMI Stadium. Picture: Stephen Laffer

■ SANFL

By JAI BEDNALL

GLENELG has lost consecutive games for the first time in more than two years to go crashing out of the SANFL finals in straight sets.

After finishing minor premier for the second season in a row, the Tigers were knocked out of the finals by Sturt, 9.6 (60) to 7.13 (55).

The heart-breaking loss came a week after Glenelg went down to Central District by two points in the second semi-final.

It is the first time Glenelg has lost two games in a row since Rounds Eight and Nine in the 2007 season.

Coach **Mark Mickan** described his side's exit from the finals race as a "devastating experience", especially given the Tigers had legitimate claims as a premiership contender this year.

"Right at the moment everyone is just gutted and it certainly feels that we underachieved, there's no doubt about that," Mickan said.

"Statistically we lost two games that there's no way we should've lost. What we've got to do is get a bit more polish in our game, get a bit more composure in our game and a little bit better execution of skill."

Just as they did when losing to the Bulldogs after leading by 26 points a week ago, the Tigers missed a number of opportunities in front of goal against the Double Blues.

Forward **Todd Grima**, who was one of the Tigers' better players, was the main culprit, kicking 0.4.

"We had opportunities all day. Kicking 7.13 is not going to win too many games," Mickan said.

"We had something like 30 more inside 50s, we just burnt the ball, bombed it too much going in there and exposed the ball to them in an area of the ground where they could rebound and they took advantage of that."

Midfielders **Adam Fisher**, **Byron Murphy** and **Lucas Block** and defender **Luke Panozzo** were among the Bays best on the day.

Despite the loss Mickan did not think the year was a total waste.

"I wouldn't like to think it's a wasted year because there is so much effort that went in to it. In the end we didn't get what we wanted."

"You've got to balance (that) when the dust settles and identify those areas where we've made progress. I think there are some."

He believed the playing group would bounce back from the loss next year.

"I've got huge belief in this group, I said that to them after the game."

"I've got huge belief in their ability to bounce back."

"I don't think it's a lack of grunt or resilience that's our problem it's just a little bit of polish and ability to finish and reward the effort."

All the pointers are for the Tigers

But it's a whole new ball game

ZAC MILBANK

TAKE a glance at the record books and it would be simplistic to think Glenelg has already won Sunday's preliminary final against Sturt.

The case for a Tigers victory at AAMI Stadium is strong when you consider the following:

GLENELG has won the past nine matches against Sturt, the Double Blues' last victory against the Bays being in round two 2007.

GLENELG'S last two finals victories have been against Sturt - the 2007 elimination final and last year's preliminary final.

GLENELG has won its past four finals against Sturt, the Blues' last win in September against the Tigers coming in the 1980 qualifying final.

It reads well on paper but all of it means nothing when the ball is bounced at 3.10pm to determine who will tackle Central District in the 2009 grand final.

"The record books say we have (an edge over Sturt)," Glenelg coach Mark Mickan said.

"But we certainly only identify each game as its own entity and Sturt in a final, like all clubs, will raise the intensity bar so we need to do that ourselves.

"That's our priority at the moment."

As is continuing the Bays' ascendancy over Sturt at the clearances, an area which proved pivotal in the result of last year's preliminary final and this year's round 21 contest at Unley.

In both matches, the Tigers - through ruckman Trevor Cranston - won the ball in close at the stoppages with Ty Allen, Adam Fisher and Byron Murphy prominent.

"Those guys have served us well all year in the midfield and we'll be relying on them to do that again," Mickan said. "But Sturt has some really capable midfielders as well, who are certainly capable of winning clearances." And carrying the football across lines with pace. As a result, Mickan looks set to add leg speed to his side after naming pacy pair Jarrod Kellock and Lachie McGregor in his squad of 23.

"It's a possibility," Mickan said. "Whether it's a big ground or a small ground, leg speed can break the game up. And if you can get someone who can apply good pressure both ways, I think that's important. It's not just a matter of being able to run and carry the ball with good speed, to be properly effective you have to apply good pressure to the opposition as well."

While Ken Farmer Medallist Brant Chambers (knee) is still absent, Mickan is refusing to underestimate the ability of Sturt's forward mix, particularly highly-talented Michael Coad, who had seven shots on goal in the first semi-final. "He's a very versatile player. We've seen him play in defence and up forward where he can kick plenty of goals," Mickan said.

"They changed their forward line on the weekend and that makes them a different team to play.

"Therefore we need to adjust and we'll certainly do that. It represents a challenge to us so we have to make sure we get those (match-ups) right."



CLEARANCE MASTER: Star Glenelg ruckman Trevor Cranston gets the ball out with support from Adam Fisher against West Adelaide. Picture: MORNE de KLERK

Ben named but no Brant

WARREN PARTLAND

STURT has refused to take a risk with goalkicking machine Brant Chambers and he has been overlooked for the preliminary final clash with Glenelg at AAMI Stadium on Sunday.

Chambers has not played since damaging his right knee in the final minor round win over the Port Adelaide Magpies and the Ken Farmer Medallist has been unable to convince medical staff he is ready for action.

Double Blues veteran Ben Nelson, missing since the final minor round with a hamstring problem, must negotiate a fitness test tomorrow before being cleared to front the Tigers.

"Ben got through training on Wednesday night and we are keen for him to play," Sturt football manager Duane Massey said. "But we have to be confident he can get through the game and we will make a judgment on him on Saturday."

James Plant and Nelson were added to the Blues' 21 who overcame Woodville-West Torrens by 10 points in the first semi-final last week.

"We will have a real crack at them this week, no doubt"

Nelson's experience will be crucial in the Double Blues' attempt to snap a nine-game losing streak against Glenelg, including last year's preliminary final, when they were smashed by 66 points.

The Double Blues believe they are getting closer to conquering their nemesis of recent years and coach Luke Norman claims the club has learned more from each game.

According to Norman, the lesson from the 24-point loss at Unley in round 21 was complacency must never be an issue.

Sturt led that game by nine points after a highly competitive first half, only to have its hopes

blown apart in the third term when the Tigers nailed 5.5 while conceding just one point.

Glenelg's domination of the Double Blues is a subject discussed by the full playing group and coaching staff at House Brothers Oval.

"We don't just sit there as coaches and point the finger and say 'this is what you have got to do,'" Norman said.

"We go through the footage and ask questions and get the players to ask questions as well.

"We work out what is the best way to go. So it is a team thing and it is good that the playing group has an involvement as well.

"That game at Unley, we were really good for a half and then dropped off. It is about playing four quarters.

"Having a young group, you get that little bit of inconsistency and that concentration... they just sort of drop off.

"We will have a real crack at them this week, no doubt."

Michael Coad has been named at centre half-back for the Double Blues, although Norman hinted the star utility may start up forward.

PRELIMINARY FINAL TEAMS

GLENELG v STURT

AAMI Stadium, Sunday 3.10pm

| | | | |
|----|----------|-----------|-----------|
| F | Button | T. Grima | Block |
| B | Fittock | Thurstans | Wark |
| HF | Backwell | Kirkby | Fisher |
| HB | Jaensch | Coad | McGlone |
| C | Ruwoldt | Hall | B. Kane |
| C | Bratton | Sheedy | Bode |
| HB | Panozzo | Kirk | Meyer |
| HF | Gum | McLeay | Johncock |
| B | Mules | Mills | Adlington |
| F | Payne | Herring | Evans |

RUCK: Cranston, Allen, Murphy.

INT (from): Sellar, Kellock, Willoughby, McConnell, McGregor.

INTO 23: Kellock, McGregor.

RUCK: Kurtze, Cubillo, Crane.

INT (from): Bowen, Plant, Sharples, Trengove, Nelson.

INTO 23: Plant, Nelson.

On TV

Glenelg v Sturt, ABC TV, 3pm Sunday.

Betting

Glenelg \$1.65 v Sturt \$2.25
- Thornton Sportsbet

Writers' tips

Warren Partland: Glenelg 13-24.
Zac Milbank: Glenelg 1-12.
Andrew Capel: Glenelg 1-12.
Candice Keller: Glenelg 13-24.

RESERVES

PRELIMINARY FINAL

Central v Glenelg - AAMI Stadium, Sunday 12.10pm
Central: Allocca, Barmby, Brading, Christmann, Dunne, Foldsdy, Frail, Fry, Habel, Hadden, Hannath, Hardy, Hynes, Kelly, Matson, Menzel, Nason, Porter, Reichert, Schiller, Vater, M. Westhoff, White, Woodards.

Glenelg: F: Hinge, Duldig, Sverdlhoff. HF: Fosdike, Day, A. Grima. C: Couch, C. Kane, Carey. HB: O'Grady, Liebelt, Sugars. B: Pekin, Clayfield, Lally. 1R: McGinty, Vallance, Snook. Int: Hitchcock, Basir.
Winner to play Eagles in grand final

UNDER-18

PRELIMINARY FINAL

Sturt v Port - AAMI Stadium, Sunday 9.10am
Sturt: Laube, Hansen, A. Wilson (c), Harms, Greenlade, Lawrie, Hughes, Shearwood, Fotheringham, Male, Stephens, Thompson, Eckermann, O'Malley, Calabrese, Johnston, Ellis, Taverner, J. O'Sullivan, Curnow, M. O'Sullivan, P. Wilson, Day, Clarke, McLeay.

Port Magpies: Heath, Howell, Solly, McCafferty, Crettenden, Johansen, Rawlings, Haren, Durdin, Buhlmann, Stoll, Deprins, Perry, Long, Burnett, Stringer, Hoskin, Franklin, Hand, Lindsay, Hood, Milera, Robertson, Dudley, Wanganeen.
Winner to play Glenelg in grand final

Can Glenelg crack Coad?

WARREN PARTLAND

IT was the obvious question to ask Sturt's Michael Coad. Where does he prefer to play - up forward or down back?

The Eyre Peninsula-raised utility has spent much of his time this season patrolling the defensive zone. But as he showed against Woodville-West Torrens in the first semi-final on Sunday, he can be sent into attack as a damaging weapon.

Sturt coach Luke Norman's ideal world has Coad in a key position in the forward line. But necessity has prompted the first-year coach to utilise him at the other end of the ground.

So where does Coad prefer? "It does not really bother me," Coad said. Come on Coady, surely you have a preference?

"I've enjoyed things down back where I get a little more freedom," he said. "You have to worry about your man and get some kicks though.

"I'd not played up there (forward) much lately and it took a little while to get used to it (against the Eagles)."

Coad has matured into an outstanding talent at Unley - confident and skilful as well as a strong mark - since being recruited from Tumby Bay where he played all his football in attack. After playing several reserve grade games for the Double Blues in 2001 while still at school on the west coast, Coad joined the club full-time for the 2002 pre-season.

He had been encouraged to move to Adelaide by Tumby Bay team-mate Kyle Atkinson, brother of Sturt's 1997 Magarey Medallist Brodie, and another Double Blues player, defender Michael Curtis.

"I always thought I'd go back to the country but I've got accustomed to Adelaide," Coad said. "Sturt is a great club.

"When I was a kid all I wanted to do was play in the SANFL." Coad shares a house with Brant Chambers, who earned his third successive Ken Farmer Medal this season as the SANFL's leading goalkicker. The star full forward has watched the finals action from the grandstand after damaging a knee in the final minor round win over the Port Adelaide Magpies.

"He's been moping around the house - not too many smiles," said Coad, a third-year carpentry apprentice with former Double Blue Matthew Powell as a boss.

For Sturt to conquer Glenelg in the preliminary final at AAMI Stadium on Sunday and earn a grand final clash against Central District, Coad must have a heavy influence. The Tigers have dominated the Blues in the past two years but Coad is confident his club is getting closer to a victory.

"When I first came here they would not beat us," Coad said. "It should be a good game - we are getting closer."