

# CHOPPA CHAT

Edition 1 – 2018

## It's all about perspective

The streak has ended and we've had two long weeks to think about it. I'm sure some of you are thinking "you weren't playing, why has it been a long two weeks for you?" Well the truth is I'm only recently retired, I still feel like a player and the losses still hurt. Although my body feeling fresh on Sunday was a good reminder.

Just like the playing group I've been doing some reflecting these last two weeks. But unlike the players where they are thinking about what they can do to improve next game, I've been thinking about the past and trying to put the 19 game winning streak coming to an end into perspective. It wasn't that long ago, that a 2-3 goal loss to Narre Warren was almost seen as a victory! Now I'm not saying you should be happy with the loss over the weekend, far from it. You should be filthy, use it as motivation to not let it happen again but don't dwell on it. We have been a strong club for a few years now and we will continue to be. One loss doesn't change that and it's probably a good little reminder to stay on our toes.

But everyone knows that. Today I'm writing a bit of reflective piece for the new people to the club or the people with short memories. To some it may come as a surprise to know that only 10 years ago, our club was the laughing stock of the competition. We finished the 2008 season in 10<sup>th</sup> (second last) position where we copped numerous 100 point thrashings, struggled to field a reserves side and had our coach and all his high priced recruits walk out mid-season. We were also targeted physically on a weekly basis (YouTube Cranbourne vs Berwick) and basically had no respect amongst the competition. It was a dark time at the club and change needed to be made.

As you would have read in Tommy's tales over the years, thanks largely to the hard work of Andrew Sear, Greg Talbett and many others, change was made at the end of the 08' season. To explain the massive upheaval is a story for another time and I may not be the best person to tell it. But what I do know is that the 2009 season was the start of a long, long journey to earning the respect that we now have in the competition. I have done some research this week and found a couple of articles that I thought were worth sharing.

This article was posted in the club notes of the footy record during round 1, 2009.

Berwick Football Club Inc. Season 2009

Each year, clubs reflect on past seasons and plan for the ultimate goal. At Berwick we have had plenty to reflect on as success has eluded us for 10 years. Much has been documented about the apparent lack of "club culture" at Berwick and we have responded accordingly.

There has been a lack of willingness for enough people to be involved in mapping the club's future and being involved in undertaking the necessary changes to generate supporter and sponsorship enthusiasm.

Our junior club is going from strength to strength due to one reason - parental commitment. The senior club is now reaping the rewards as the parents and supporters of the junior teams are now involving themselves as their boys move into the senior ranks. Up to a dozen people have already indicated that want to commit themselves to elevating the club to where it will again become successful.

With a strong off field structure and a determined effort to promote Berwick as a "local football club" through the ongoing development of our talented juniors, we have begun to attract locals back to the playing group.

This will be the corner stone that will restore a proud local culture that will generate enthusiasm amongst supporters and sponsors alike.

We do not expect to see overnight success but we plan for a major improvement by establishing a structure to guide and stabilise the club through the coming seasons.

On the playing side, pre season numbers have been very encouraging with better training facilities than in past years. Opportunities are high for players to move from the under 18's into the seniors this year but this year it will be based on merit and not just to gain some experience. Competition for senior places must make us stronger.

We will be fielding a very young team this season with the oldest player being only 26 years old. Youth is our way forward and should remain that way as players continue to flourish in our junior ranks. Former junior and under 18 player Ash Smith has been drafted by West Coast Eagles this year and we will have approximately 6 more going around with the Dandenong Stingrays this season. Hopefully some will be drafted in the coming seasons but for those who don't, their experiences will stand them and the Berwick Football Club in good stead when they return to our ranks.

Strength will come through support and this year we have planned some exciting new membership packages to provide supporters with excellent value for money. Visit our new web site for details

[www.berwickfc.com.au](http://www.berwickfc.com.au) Like our club motto says – "ACTIONS WILL SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS"

The key message here was about creating "culture". Every club wants to have a strong "culture" but what does that mean? I don't think we really knew at the time but what I can remember for sure, was that there was a real buzz around the club and the footy club was a fun place to be. Glen Dale had just been appointed senior coach and he brought with him several recruits such as Grant Noonan, Jason Heath, Sean "Squid" Calamatta, Rowan and Spud Pybus, Matt Streit, and Brett Saunders. They weren't necessarily locals, but they were experienced players who would complement the youth we had coming through. Most importantly they were great blokes. Also returning to the club after a stint at Lang Lang was Dale Robinson (older brother of Brett). Everyone walked a lot taller knowing Noons and Heathy had your back. We became a tight group on and off the field. Thursdays and Saturdays quickly became the highlights of the week. (As they were throughout my career, especially Thursday nights with the crew, led by Roo.)

As you would be aware Ash Smith has since returned to Berwick along with Travis Tuck who was on Hawthorn's list at the time. Madi Andrews, Riley Heddles and Luke Sheppard make up 3 of those 6 Stingray players mentioned. Jake Mclardy and Tim Gunn would also go on to make their senior debuts that season. They have all significantly improved the club on field but more importantly contributed massively to our "culture".

Going into round 3 this week against Daniel Charles', Doveton (Berwick's coach for the second half of 2008) I thought it would be good to have a look back at an article published in the Pakenham Gazette after round 3, 2009.



### **Berwick Makes It Three From Three 02/05/2009**

BERWICK is shaping as the MPNFL fairytale story of 2009. The Wicks could muster just two wins in a woeful 2008, but under the guidance of rookie coach Glenn Dale, they are adding credence to pre-season expectations. The Wicks are undefeated. They're the first club to notch three wins and have scored more than 100 points in every game. But it is the manner in which Dale's troops have disposed of sides that has been most impressive. Each match has presented a challenge. Every time they've dug deep and found a way to win. Saturday's was the best yet. Down by 15 points against ROC midway through the third term, Berwick rallied as the lead changed five times in the last quarter. It lifted a gear from there and piled on the last four goals to run out a convincing winner. It was a cracking game, a classic shoot-out - 42 goals shared between 19 players. ROC coach Kris Fletcher was hurting after the match, and looked forward to plead with his charges for a more concerted effort against Doveton this week. Ex-Tiger Greg Tivendale starred, snaring four goals, while Mick Moylan (two goals) and Shaun Jones ran hard all day. Andy Logan and David Main kicked three each for the Roos. But few teams will match Berwick for pace and gut-busting running through the centre corridor. The likes of Andrew Tuck, Billy Carlyle, youngster Nathan Page, Adam Mott and Tom Andrews can all carry the ball

with class and speed. Midfield dominance combined with Jason Heath across half-forward and the monstrous Grant Noonan will give plenty of coaches' headaches this season. Noonan is leading the league's goalkicking, while Tuck is in Norm Walker Medal form. The two question marks are the defence and the perceived unhealthy reliance on Noonan. Dale asked for 60-80 goals from Noonan pre-season, but dismissed the theory his team was one-dimensional up forward. With 17.10 in three weeks, Noonan should be aiming for the ton in 2009. He's done it before. As for the defence, Berwick leaked 19 goals on Saturday, but it's hard to be too critical as it was without ruckman Brett Robinson and centre half-back Shaun Calamatta. Both will return and straighten up the Wicks this Saturday for their blockbuster match against triple reigning premier Narre Warren. A home game against the champs is the perfect challenge for the Berwick, which will probably go in as the underdog. That suits Dale just fine. A young side can fall in and out of form very quickly. But if the Wicks triumph against Narre, it will be another brick in the road to finals - and a fairy-tale rise.

It seems like a fairy-tale to think our club went so close to not being around anymore. That's why it is so important to have perspective when looking at our losses over the weekend. Competition keeps you hungry and that is a good thing. Both sides are so talented and you will bounce back. Things can change pretty quickly so make sure you truly enjoy the good times, keep striving to be the best you can because that is where true satisfaction comes from and remember how lucky you are to playing for the Berwick Football Club. All the best this weekend.

*Also I'll shout a beer to the first bloke who can identify the bloke in picture.*

**Choppa Chat to formally return next week with Reserves Captain Trent Van Hout as my first chat.**