

CHOPPA CHAT

Edition 1 - 2017

The first edition of "Choppa Chat" welcomes Berwick Premiership Captain Madi Andrews. We sat down on a Tuesday afternoon to discuss footy, girls names and solariums. Here's our chat;

TA: Premiership captain, VFL player, league best and fairest, 4 time senior best and fairest, interleague representative, multiple team of the year selections... have I missed anything?

MA: I think you've missed a couple of things haha. But seriously I remember when I was a bit fat back in my junior days and the only thing I could win was the coaches award so it's been nice to collect a couple of awards in my later years.

TA: You play a fearless brand of footy and there is nothing better than watching you roving ruck taps at full flight and pumping the ball forwards. Who has had the biggest influence on your football career?

MA: 100% my old man. He was hard on me growing up but that made me work harder and strive to be the best I can be and I have to thank him for that.

TA: 2016 was an interesting year; you started the season in career best form, got embroiled in an investigation that would linger on, you headed overseas, missed 8 games, returned for the finals where we unfortunately went down in the Grand Final. Will 2017 be a more settled season for you?

MA: Yeah I'd like to think so. I think you play your best footy between the ages of 25-27, my body feels good and I'm setting myself for a massive year.

TA: You are renowned for playing injured. You appeared to hurt your knee severely during the preliminary final last year and it was a week long battle to get you right. What was the diagnosis and were you ever a chance to miss the grand final?

MA: I don't think I was ever going to miss. I had ligament tear at the back of my kneecap, I had some doubts early in the week but Paul and I managed it and in the end I don't think it affected my game.

TA: No I think you were definitely one of our best players on the day. But I have heard the injury was a little more serious than you're letting on. What did you have to do specifically to get up for the game?

MA: Haha well I went in the hyperbaric chamber everyday. I don't know what its supposed to do but they told me to do that. Pretty much did nothing but rest for the week. I did a light run on Thursday, slightly restricted but relatively pain free and that gave me the confidence that I would get through the game.

TA: You have noticeably trimmed down over the last couple of years. What is your current playing weight and what was the heaviest you played at?

MA: Well heading into the 2015 season I was weighing 95kg and I'm currently weighing 80kg. Obviously 95kg was way too heavy, not good for the body and if I kept playing at that weight I wasn't going to have a very long career.

TA: Yes you shared some insight into your cardio routine during your infamous 2014 best and fairest speech. Obviously there has been some changes can you explain those?

MA: Well some aspects are definitely the same but the main change was starting personal training with Micky Harold a couple of times a week. He's pretty strict on me and I need that so he's been great.

TA: You played in a grand final for the Dandenong Stingrays, had 3 seasons in the VFL at Sandringham, how close were you to making the AFL?

MA: I'd like to think I was around the mark but basically I just didn't have the skillset for it. I had the heart, I was committed but I just didn't have the elite skillset that is required and once I realised that I'd given it everything and had played at the highest level I could, I made the decision to return to Berwick with my mates and where I love playing my footy.

TA: Any regrets?

MA: Not really, I mean every now and again you might think about little moments here and there but at the end of the day I feel I gave it my best crack and just wasn't quite good enough.

TA: The Matt Fletcher incident last year was an unfortunate saga. Can you share some insight on how it affected you as a player and as a person?

MA: Well it disappointed me because I feel I've always played hard and tough but fair. I didn't mean to hurt the guy and it was just an accident that happens in footy. I was annoyed that it wasn't dealt with earlier and it played on my mind when I was overseas which was frustrating. I think the whole situation should have been handled better.

TA: You were rightfully cleared but your reputation took a hit. Does that disappoint you?

MA: Well yeah for sure. I think anyone that has seen me play knows how I play the game. But with the investigation taking so long, rumours were going around and my reputation has probably taken a hit. But at the end of the day I'm comfortable with my actions and how we handled the situation and you move on.

TA: I recall playing with you in your early days in senior footy under Ronnie Burns. What are your earliest memories of senior footy?

MA: Well I was 16 when I made my debut and I remember running out there with guys such as Molly (Brad Molineux), DVD (David Van Dieman), Tucky (Andrew Tuck), you (Tom Andrews), Pauly (Paul Van Schilt), Barnesy (Shaun Barnes), Mozza (Andrew Morozoff) and then a whole lot of recruits from Darwin.

TA: Yes the club was very different back then and we went through some dark times.

MA: Yeah it was definitely different times but I really enjoyed playing and I have to thank Ronnie for backing me and giving me a chance as 16 year old. I played 5 senior games and the stingrays heard that I was going ok so they started picking me.

TA: You were handed the captaincy of the club at 22 years of age and you have developed into a terrific leader. There has never been any doubts about your football ability but you weren't always comfortable in the role of captain and some people had doubts early that you weren't the right man for the job. Was that fair?

MA: Yeah early on for sure. When I first came back to Berwick I liked to focus on my own game and having that leadership position took my mind off that. I would find myself thinking about what I was going to say next instead of thinking about the game and I honestly found it to be a bit distracting. But then when Micky Harold came on as my Co-Captain he took away a lot of that verbal responsibility and then I was able to gradually grow into the role and I now feel I have a good balance leading with my on field actions and also leading with my voice and instruction.

TA: Do you hold any animosity towards your parents for giving you a girls name?

MA: Yes I actually got bullied regularly throughout my childhood because of it.

TA: Is it true that the commentators sledged you in your first televised VFL game?

MA: Yes – I believe it went something like this "long hair, girls name, this boy would wanna hope he can get a kick".

TA: And did you?

MA: I went ok, got picked the next week so I couldn't have been too bad.

TA: You take pride in your appearance; nice clothes, fortnightly hair cuts, regular solarium visits. Please explain?

MA: Well my motto has always been "look good, feel good, play good."

TA: Well it's working. You love playing football but aren't a big fan of watching the game. What do you enjoy in your spare time?

MA: Yeah i don't mind watching the occasional game but I rarely sit down and watch a full A.F.L. game. I prefer to lay a few bricks, go for a surf, train with Micky and spend time with my girlfriend, Bec.

TA: Well we are all glad that you enjoy playing footy. Thanks for the chat today and all the best on the weekend.