

CHOPPA CHAT

Edition 2 - 2017

For the second edition of "Choppa Chat" I caught up with veteran Andrew Morozoff. Both our Mrs were working so we got together Tuesday night after training for a few beers and a box of cruskits. Here's our chat;

TA: Hi Moz you're a long time Berwick player, going back to the under 9s. You've gone on to play 150+ senior games including a senior premierships. Is there a particular moment that stands out to you?

AM: Obviously the premierships were great and even back playing u18s footy I've got some great memories and it was during that time that I met most of my best mates that I still have today. Sitting in the back of the utes and sinking tinnies straight after the game behind the goals was always enjoyable back then.

TA: You burst onto the scene in 2007 under Ronnie Burns earning yourself a young gun nomination in round 4. (The league used to nominate the best young player every few weeks - similar to the rising star in the AFL.) What was it like to receive that honour?

AM: Well for starters I didn't know they gave out those awards but I guess it was nice at the time and good to look back on now. I know it amuses some people so I'm happy to be a part of that.

TA: You mention that it amuses some people, do you think in hindsight it may have put too much pressure on you as a young player, especially a key position player?

AM: No not really, I never felt the pressure and if anything it motivated me to take my footy more seriously at a time when I was really just playing for a bit of fun.

TA: Ronnie Burns was the coach at the time and you and he had a good relationship early.

AM: Yeah definitely early when I was playing well, he would pump me up and tell me that he would get some AFL scouts down to watch a few of us play. He sent down a scout from the doggies to a narre game and give me some halftime advice, and I just thought it was some bogan who loved local footy and wearing his brand new doggies gear. So I didn't really pay much attention to it. Then he rocked up at training a few times and I thought maybe I was a shot. Then spoke to him a month or so later on and turns out he had been fired or left and asked me to come play div 3 ammos, so bit of a let down haha. Apparently hadn't been recruiting to well. The other one was Greg Miller I think his name was from the tigers, responsible I do believe for the Tambling/Franklin incident.

TA: You Ronnie also had a falling out towards the end of tenure. Which lead to the famous confrontation down at the old Beaconsfield rooms after a heavy loss. Can you elaborate on this incident?

AM: Yeah well the side and myself were struggling at the time and I'd been on the receiving end of a few sprays and I guess he was frustrated with me because of the faith he'd put in me. A few weeks before that beacy game I copped a heavy knee knock during a collision with Bully Wilson down at Doveton and damaged the cartilage and couldn't bend my leg to well and it would lock out at times. So came off near the end of the first, same with big clog. Anyways doesn't put either of us on, going into the last quarter we are about 20 goals down, and he says I'm putting you both on ball and you would want to show a bit and we both did sweet FA. Anyway at the end of the game Clogga (David Van Diemen) who also had to come off the ground due to an injury sat down next to me in the rooms....

TA: And you were both in the firing line

AM: Yeah he basically just let us have it for a couple of minutes. Smashed the board. Think the old runner muppet got knocked around and Cammy dykers old man stepped in and gave his 2 cents and it just got worse from there.

TA: I think it may have gone something like "Mozza... Clogga... I'll end your careers before this season is over."

AM: Yeah that sounds about right. It was a bit of an ugly situation but Ronnie stood down the week after so I guess I won haha. It's funny to look back on now and I hold no grudge against him.

TA: You left the wickers for a season in 2010 to go and play for Catani. What was the motivation behind that?

AM: I wasn't enjoying playing at the time, I was a bit frustrated with the teams form and my own form so I was planning on having a year off. Then in early jan I got a phone call and after a bit of convincing decided to give it a shot.

TA: Did you enjoy your time there?

AM: Yeah I loved it. They were a great club, where all the boys were best mates off field, had a bit of success previous years and were on the downside of it, a bit of a different culture compared to Berwick at the time.

TA: Mateship is a big motivator for you?

AM: That is one of the main reasons I play and if you don't enjoy the company of your team mates, whats the point in playing.

TA: So I'm assuming it was the mateship that you formed over the years that brought you back to Berwick the following season?

AM: Yeah the Catani guys were great blokes but it wasn't the same as the mateship that was formed coming up through the juniors and the u18s. Also there was young guys like Sheppo and Gunny that age group were starting to come along and I wanted to be a part of it. The year away had freshened me up and I was keen to get back.

TA: After an injury plagued 2012 season you managed to scrape 3 reserves games together and play in the breakthrough 2012 flag. What was that like?

AM: I battled a pretty persistent ankle injury that year. I strung a couple of games together and when we got knocked out of the finals by Tooridan I thought my year was done. But as it turned out I had qualified for the 2s finals. I was reluctant to play because I felt guilty taking someone's spot who had played all year. But Homer selected me to play and we were playing against Narre Warren who were undefeated all year and I thought I could make a difference.

TA: At the time the club hadn't had a lot of success. Did that play on your mind?

MA: Yeah I thought it was important, don't think I had ever been so focused on winning a game and afterwards I'm glad I played because I loved being a part of it especially when I got to see what it meant to certain people around the club.

TA: Arguable you played your best football as a "utility" under Rhys Nisbet. Was this a maturity thing or did Roo know how to get the best out of you?

MA: Well when Roo started coaching I went to him said can you get me near the ball, as it can be frustrating at times as a forward. He put me into the ruck and put the onus on me to get the side up and about with my attack on the footy and the man. I enjoyed that and I guess I played my most consistent footy under him. So yeah I think he did.

TA: The ultimate success came in 2015, were you confident going into that game?

AM: Yeah I was. They had blown us out of the water in the first quarter of the semi final but we came back and had we kicked straight may have come over the top of them on that day so I knew if we got a run on we could beat anyone. And as it turned out it was the best moment of my footy career.

TA: How many more seasons have you got left in you?

AM: The aim has always been to play 200 senior games. I'm around the 150 mark so I guess the aim is at least another 3 seasons.

TA: Why is 200 games so significant?

AM: Well it just hasn't happened very often at Berwick. And when I look back to the start of my career and everyone was bailing out and no one wanted to play here. To look at the position the club is in now and hopefully more success is to come, it will be great to look back and say I was a part of the group that helped turn the club around in some small way.

TA: Can you list some of your favourite team mates over the journey.

AM: Well I always loved playing with Paul Van Schilt, Kris Fowler, Barns and yourself as we grew up together, I always knew you would give a 100% on the field and you also loved the wicks. I also rate Gunny really highly as a player because of work rate and how much team stuff he does that goes unnoticed. Jordy Andrews at full flight was always fun to play with as well.

TA: We've had a good look back through your footy career is there anything else you would like to let your fans in on, such as your hobbies outside of footy or a little plug for your business?

AM: Yeah AM air get around it haha. These days I'm just generally working on my house doing a few reno's. I'm into my real estate and always looking to expand but other than that just a few beers with my mates.

TA: Well thanks for being my second guest on "Choppa Chat" I was trying to get Gaz but he has alluded me so thanks for stepping in. It's been good to have reminisce a little bit and talk a bit more serious than we normally would.

AM: Thanks mate it's been good to be on "Choppa Chat" and f**k Gaz.