

CHOPPA CHAT

Edition 4 – 2017

For the fourth edition of “Choppa Chat” I caught up with Jake Mclardy fresh from his trip to the States. We had a couple beers at my place on Tuesday night after training to discuss mateship, family and fighting. Here’s our chat;

TA: Firstly welcome back from the states. How was the trip?

JM: Yeah it was good mate, we went to the East and West Coast, Mexico, and Canada. It’s good to be back though.

TA: What was your favourite place?

JM: San Diego because you could easily live there and New York was just awesome.

TA: There are a few nicknames around the club, we found out the story behind the gaz (Ash Smith) nickname last week can you tell us how you came to be Shardy?

JM: Well it was about 5-6 years ago when we were playing Cranbourne, round 1 I think. I had a pretty ordinary haircut at the time. A blue broke out between Mitta (Mitch Talbet) and Theo from cranny. I helped Mitta out and when we were running back to the middle, Theo said to me “why don’t you go and jump off a bridge you f**king shard addict.” We got rolled by a couple of goals. Mitta then told all the boys in the rooms after the game and it has stuck.

TA: You’ve grown up in household full of boys. I reckon you’ve had some pretty epic battles over the years any stories you can share?

JM: Yeah there was a few beatings handed out over the years. We all had our different personalities. I was the older dominate brother. Dossy was the easiest one to upset and he would turn into a psychopath. But Budha was the one who used to upset me the most. One day during a game of pool he annoyed me that much that I chased him around the table, I predicted which way he would run and caught him head on with a flying knee and knocked him through the wall. I then walked off saying “you deserved it”. Trent Van Hout was there and he was just like “you can’t do that”

TA: And what were the repercussions of that?

JM: Fair to say I felt the wrath of Slappa (Jake’s Dad)

TA: Well I won’t ask anymore haha. Anyway let’s get into the footy now. You played all of your junior footy at Berwick, so it was a natural progression into the senior club. When did you play your first senior game?

JM: Well it was when I was 17 under Glen Dale in 2009 against Keysborough. We had a good win and I kicked a couple so that was good.

TA: You came to the club with Sheppo, Gunny, Trenna, Mitta. You are a tight bunch of mates. Tell us about your friendship.

JM: Well we played together since under 12’s and we have hung out ever since. We kind of made a pact to stick together and we all love the Berwick Footy Club.

TA: I believe your crew has really strengthened our club, do you know what I mean when I say that?

JM: Yeah I think so. We always wanted to make sure new guys felt welcome and we want the club to be a place people want to be. Whether that is getting around functions, training or on gameday. I really think that nothing replaces mateship. You could go down and play in the lesser leagues for money but it just wouldn’t be the same without your mates that you grew up playing with and I truly understand that now. I think we have helped develop a good culture.

TA: I agree with you for sure.

TA: You had a couple of seasons where you were a regular in the seniors but you were in and out of the side in 2014. How frustrating was that year?

JM: Well I view my whole senior career as very frustrating. I probably haven't taken my opportunities but I also don't feel I have been given many opportunities. I started playing good footy under Dean Rice but I got suspended for 3 weeks in his last year and then I didn't get many opportunities after that and I lost my confidence. From then on I always felt like playing senior footy was a burden and that mindset definitely hindered me. Playing 2s I could just relax and I tendered to play my best footy but then I couldn't replicate that form in the 1s from limited opportunities. But that is my fault and I don't blame anyone for that.

TA: With that built up frustration you ended up making the move to Mazenod at the beginning of the 2015 season. Why Mazenod?

JM: Originally family. I know my brothers were at Berwick but I have a close cousin who was at Mazenod. I thought a fresh start would be good but that didn't work out.

TA: Fair to say you didn't enjoy your time there?

JM: Yeah well my cousin didn't end up playing so I was basically playing with 21 strangers. I mean I got to know some blokes but it wasn't the same as the friendships I had developed over 15 years. That's when I truly learnt the value of mateship within a footy club. I am happy running around in the 2s these days knowing that I'm playing with my best mates. You can't replace that feeling.

TA: Well by round 3 of that season you were back at Berwick.

JM: As I said I was missing the boys and the functions and I realised how much I love the club.

TA: You found your way back into the senior side by round 6. A massive effort, did you feel pressure to perform?

JM: No not really. I had done a big preseason so I was fit and I really wanted to play in the 1s and I no longer felt that burden I had felt earlier in my career. I had low expectations because I know Roo was disappointed in me for leaving but credit to him he held no grudges. I always loved playing under Roo. I still had a frustrating role within that team where I was playing on and off the bench but we were winning so I couldn't complain.

TA: What would you say to players who may be on the fringe and are thinking about changing clubs for more opportunities/money?

JM: Well if you are referring to a good young player who was offered money to leave I would say you need to weigh it up. The money offer would have to be ridiculously large because when you factor in travel time, success, not knowing your team mates to me it just isn't worth it. Not that I left for money but I understand that the grass isn't always greener. Without naming names I've seen it happen many times at this club and someone who just comes for money rarely lasts.

TA: Back to the 2015 season you ended up playing in the 1s from round 6 on and ultimately played in a premierships. How special was that?

JM: It was very special, people running onto the ground that you didn't even know thanking you and congratulating you it was great to be a part of.

TA: How special was it for your family?

JM: Well it was obviously pretty amazing to have a brother play in every premierships. (1s – Jake, 2s – Hayden, 19s – Daniel, 18s – Matt). Seeing dad with a tear in his eye was pretty special. I know his dream was for us boys to all play in a flag together and I guess that was pretty close.

TA: Who knows maybe this year 3 of you will.

JM: Well that is the plan.

TA: Not many people know this but you almost missed that Grand Final through injury. Can you shed some light on that?

JM: Well it felt like a corky at the top of my leg. I'd had a similar injury when I was 18. And on that occasion it turned out to be a fracture in my fibula. So I was pretty nervous. Tuesday night of Grand Final week I sort of hid at the back of the cones and tried to stay away from the ball. In hindsight I should have just said something because I may have been able to get some treatment but anyway I did the same thing on Thursday night. By Friday I was in a lot of pain. I took the day off work and

tried doing some running but I couldn't go more than 50m without severe pain. So I made the very difficult decision to call Roo. He told me that he couldn't play me if I wasn't 100%. I went and saw a little Asian doctor who gave me a few jabs around my belly button. Whatever he did it worked and I was able to pass my fitness test with Roo that night.

TA: That is incredibly unselfish of you.

JM: Well I didn't want to let the team down and thankfully we won. I didn't have the greatest game but with the time I spent on the ground I feel I made the most of my opportunities. I had taken a lot of painkillers pregame and by halftime I was pretty cooked.

TA: You're not a big man but you have plenty of fight in you. Is it small man syndrome or something else?

JM: It's not small man syndrome because I win.

(Jammo pipes in at this moment with "what about when I tapped you last night.")

TA: Haha ok. Well there was a game in mid-2014 against Narre Warren down at Fox road where I believe we took a stand as a club and you were a big part of that. Do you know what I am referring too?

JM: Yeah I do. Typically over the years Narre had bullied us and during this game a player I had previously had a few run ins with was mouthing off to me. I was pretty frustrated and next contest I threw a few knees into his back and it was on. We stood up to them, Jordy knocked down their ruckman and I don't know did we win that game?

TA: No we lost but I believe we have won 6 of the last 7 games against them since.

JM: Yeah it was a good feeling to finally stand up to them and what I did was pretty dirty but I enjoyed doing it.

TA: You're into your martial arts. Particulary Jiu Jitsu and Muay Thai.

JM: Yeah I love it. Great for fitness and I love learning something new. Bit different to footy where I'm playing more for enjoyment where every jiu jitsu class I go to I learn something new and that is good.

TA: You're a regular on footy trips what makes those trips so special?

JM: Well we have a good crew. We aren't too feral and it's just great to bond with the boys. You always go home wishing the footy season was starting not finishing.

TA: Who is the best player you have seen play for Berwick?

JM: When I first started playing in the 1s Jason Heath was the standout. Kicked goals, pack marks, smashed people, could play at either end. I wish he played more at Berwick. And of course Madi Andrews and I don't think anything really needs to be said there.

TA: You're into your fashion and you're pretty proud of your rig, what do you think is your best physical feature?

JM: Well I think that is pretty obvious. My d**k.

TA: Haha you're not right!

TA: You are 25.....

JM: I know where you are going with this

TA: You are still living at home, you know how I feel about this. The house is full, you have a lovely partner, any chance you will be moving out anytime soon.

JM: Haha well I'm about to start working for myself so I can't see myself leaving anytime soon.

TA: Fking hell I just don't understand you young blokes. Anyway thanks for the chat. All the best this weekend**

JM: Cheers mate I can't wait.