

CHOPPA CHAT

Choppa Chat continues with enigmatic forward, Trent “tickets” Thomas. This is honestly one of my favourite chats that I have done to date. It was a long chat and I’ve had to split it into two parts. We discuss premierships, razzing, his relationship with Stu and much more. Here’s part one;

TA: Hi mate thanks for joining me, just want to start off with happy 21st! Many great men are born on the 16th of May, how does it feel to share that date with me?

TT: Thanks Chop! Didn’t realise we did. It just makes the day that little more special, very big day in the Berwick footy club calendar

TA: How did you celebrate?

TT: Heading into the city straight after training on Saturday and got stuck into it.

TA: Very good. Alright let’s get into it. I wanted to have a chat with you tonight because I think people have a perception of you and I thought it would be a good chance to find out a bit more about you.

TT: Thanks for having me.

TA: Alright I wanted to start off by talking about one of my early dealings with you and when I realised that you were a man of pretty good character. It was just before round 1 last year and everyone was having a kick after training and you and I had words. Do you remember this?

TT: Yeah I remember that haha.

TA: Well basically I was taking out a few years of frustration and you were the unlucky bloke to cop it.

TT: I do remember thinking that you were meant to be a good bloke haha.

TA: Haha well basically my pet hate for years has been cocky forward line players who have 50 shots after training and just expecting blokes to feed them footys all night. Wolfy and I had spent years retrieving footys for these forwards (not naming names). So when you yelled something out to me I thought you wanted me to kick some more footy’s to you. I was thinking how’s this cocky little bastards form? But I was off the mark.

TT: Yeah I was heading inside and I said “Choppa do you want these footy’s or do you want us to leave them here” and I think you thought I was saying something else. You had a bit of dig and remember thinking “fuck Choppa, I thought he was meant to be a good bloke and here is having a snipe at me.”

TA: Haha yeah I definitely felt bad about it and I thought I need to make this right at some stage. And then after your first game, everyone was celebrating and you came and found me in the rooms and said I just want to clear the air and we did and that’s when I thought “Gee Tenna is a pretty genuine bloke”. You went out of your way to confront me, when I was the one who had the crack and just wanted to make sure everything was cool and I have a lot of respect for you for that. I only just remembered that story when I was driving in tonight and I thought it would be a good way to start.

TT: Well I’d be happy if you told a few more people about that haha.

TA: Haha alright now let’s have a look at the other side of you.. The arrogance. How does the name “tickets” sit with you?

TT: Well most of the guys that play here are pretty quiet, keep to themselves a bit, they’re not really too out there. I just like to get under their skin a bit, like I’ll take the piss out of Risa (Michael Risely), he’s quiet and pretty reserved, but when he has something to say back to me and everyone hears it, everyone loves it and gets around him. Happens with all the quiet boys you know, if you get stuck into them and they fire back at you, it just creates a bit of banter between the boys and gets everyone up and about and makes training a little bit more enjoyable I reckon.

TA: Ah very good. So you're just playing your role for the team?

TT: Yeah well you know all the young boys are pretty quiet, like Bazza and Forrest, you need a little cheeky bugger like me to fire everyone up a bit.

TA: Excellent. So did you grow up in Berwick?

TT: I moved houses a fair bit growing up. I lived out in Koo Wee Rup and I wanted to play footy when I was about 7. I had a year at Auskick but I was able to run the field and kick goals because no one took it too seriously, so after a year I wanted to start playing for a team. My neighbour was secretary down at Pakenham so I went down there in the under 9s when I was 7 because the youngest age at Koo Wee was under 13s. My first year there I kicked 2 points for the whole year and couldn't get near it. But the next year I snagged a few in the first game and I just loved it. I played at Paky for a few years. We lost the under 10s Grand Final, I think I was in tears by halftime, we were getting smashed. I moved to Narre Warren when I was 14. I was going to school with Jarrod Trait and a mate Kyle who both played at Berwick. Paky were dropping down a division and I was living in Narre at the time so I had choice out of Berwick and Narre. As much as Jarrod was a little flog back then he managed to get me across to Berwick. His mum Vicki Trait would pick me up and drive me to and from training every night which was a big help.

TA: So were you always a forward?

TT: Yeah I started off in the forward line but I also sat on the bench a lot.

TA: That Berwick side was pretty successful wasn't it?

TT: Yeah we lost the granny in u14's, then got knocked out in straight sets after finishing on top in 15s. Narre won both of those flags and going into 16s they were going for 3 in a row and we managed to knock them off in the granny with a kick after the siren. I've won a few flags and that one was the best.

TA: So you headed up to the senior club the following year?

TT: Yeah I was pretty nervous heading to the senior club. I was only 17 and didn't really know anyone but I remember our first function. We walked in and there was all the top age 19s player sitting on the leather couches and brought us in and said who wants a drink. We got pretty excited then, we got the coin game going on and it was great fun. We were talking about the function on Tuesday night at training and have loved the place ever since.

TA: Last year was your first year of seniors?

TT: Yeah, yeah so we won the flag in 17's, won the flag in first year 19s, won the flag in overtime in my second year of 19s, I had an absolute stinker though.

TA: That's alright we don't have to talk about that.

TT: I went alright in the first year, but obviously winning was the most important thing, that made it 4 in a row. Then we won last year as well in my first year of senior footy, which made it 5 in a row. So aiming for 6 straight this year.

TA: Wow that is a pretty impressive record. So how did you enjoy your first year of senior footy?

TT: Yeah I finished the 19s in pretty good form. I really wanted to get a game when I was playing in 19s, but the 1s was obviously a pretty difficult side to break into. So my aim last year was to get into the side and then hold my spot. Fortunately I had a good preseason and got picked in round 1. Stew showed some faith in me and I ended up playing most of the year in the 1s. I got a few injuries along the way. Then coming into the finals my spot was really up for grabs. I knew I needed to play well in the last round of the year to hold my spot. Then in the first quarter I had to go for a bump near the boundary, I just hit the wrong spot and I hurt my AC joint. I had to miss the first week of the finals and I never made it back into the senior side.

TA: So you played in the 2s in the qualifying final?

TT: Yeah we got done by Narre, who were undefeated, by a couple of points. The 1s got up which meant they went straight into the Grand Final. I couldn't play the following week in the Prelim for the 2s because I didn't qualify.

TA: So how was it watching on from the sidelines?

TT: Yeah it was weird feeling because I couldn't even play well to try and earn my spot back in the 1s. But the boys got the job done and we ended up getting the win in the granny as well.

TA: So how was playing and winning the 2s flag but then having to watch the 1s go on to win also?

TT: Yeah it was tough to watch but obviously it was still great to win a flag and I still enjoyed all the celebrations.

TA: You could probably argue that the 2s might not have won without you?

TT: Oh nah I don't think so.

TA: Can you talk us through that little toe poke?

TT: Yeah I guess I was just in the right spot. I was cramping up just before it and I ran to the bench, skulled some pickle juice and then ran straight back to the goal square. Nick Hillard was coming through the middle with the ball. He didn't see me so he kicked it to a contest, he managed to win the ball back at about 40m, and he still didn't see me and had a shot for goal. I was a bit annoyed because he was never making the distance and there was 2 narre blokes in the square. I just followed the flight of the ball and one of the narre blokes who was normally safe as houses, spilt a chest mark and then slipped over I just happened to be in the right place at the right time and kicked it through. It was a good feeling but I didn't think the game was over just yet.

TA: Well you took a mark about 2 minutes later about 30 out.

TT: Yeah I did but I landed on my ankle that I had been having a bit of trouble with. I was in so much pain and couldn't take my kick. So I let Jordy take the kick, hoping he would get the job done.

TA: Well we know he just missed, would you have kicked it?

TT: Nah I was in way too much pain I couldn't even stand up.

TA: So obviously a great feeling to win a flag but did it hurt to watch the 1s standing on the podium 2 hours later?

TT: Yeah it did. I love the 2s boys but I only played 1 game with them throughout the year and I guess I just felt a bit closer to the 1s boys. Since I've understood footy all I wanted was to win a senior flag. I know I'll get another opportunity but that could have been the year, I could have been on the field and not had a touch and we still would have won, that's how well they played on the day, it would have been an easy flag to win if that makes sense.

TA: Yeah I get what you are saying for sure.

We'll be back with part 2 of Choppa Chat with Trent Thomas next week where we talk about his form this year, his relationship with the coach and his strange living arrangements.

