

ROOSTER REMINISCES

A look back at a memorable match from each round

Round 10

Season 2011 (Saturday 4 June)



Clint Alleway, in his 100th game, leads the boys out onto Woodville Oval in 2011

Football has a funny way of teasing people's emotions. Whilst the old saying that "you have to be in it to win it" is an old adage and basically true – without being in the contest you have no chance of victory. However there are many occasions when entering the contest that the odds are definitely against one side and the two teams are at different counterpoints in their development: one side on the ropes and struggling to put any decent football together; the other who are at the top of their game. But this is football, and when you least expect it the underdogs occasionally rise for an unexpected, miracle victory and the old adage is again proven right. Past Rooster Reminiscences have reflected some great North comebacks but for persistence, to continue finding their way back into the game when their opposition constantly threatened to blow the game open, and in a showdown like David and Goliath North's return into the changerooms at Woodville Oval victorious in 2011 is up there with the best.

Background

2011 was a tough season for North. After missing the finals in 2010 North were struggling to make ends meet despite quality names recorded on paper. First-season coach **Josh Francou** headed to Woodville Oval in Round 10 with only one win in their account and the club sitting bottom of the ladder. It was expected to be a long afternoon against a more qualified, experienced and settled side who were sitting comfortably second on the ladder.

The Match

Only four wins from the 19 encounters against the Eagles at Woodville Oval was a daunting statistic for the Roosters and it looked like continuing again when the Eagles dominated the first quarter to open a three-goal gap. With the Eagles grabbing the early ascendancy North began pegging it back in the second and entered half time trailing by 14 points without ever being able to close the scoring gap any tighter. The Eagles again broke away in the third term outscoring North as the red-and-whites continually playing catch-up football. The frustration for players and supporters grew when, with each occasion they began to close the margin, the Eagles would steady and widen the gap once again. Late in the third term the Eagles were sitting with a lead of 25-points and anything but a creditable loss was all that North were going to saviour from the game.

But then it happened. Coach **Francou** made some critical adjustments to the structure of the team with captain and forward **Clint Alleway**, quiet in his 100th game, moved into defence, wingman **Leigh Ryswyk** moved forward and North's "Lurch" **Henry Mason** given a spell in ruck – all proving influential

in the victory. North suddenly began to peg the margin closer and closer with the restricting of the Eagles scoring pivotal in the final stanza. Suddenly not only had North caught up to the highly-fancied Eagles but had hit the lead and showed no signs of slowing down. The Eagles didn't know what hit 'em! Ironically it was North's ball-magnet and hero **James Allan** – again playing a maestro performance in the centre - who fittingly was fed a ball from the north-eastern flank throw-in and kicked truly to put the Roosters over two goals ahead in time-on to ensure the brilliant comeback would be fulfilled. North, from nowhere, produced a seven-goal to one final quarter to take the premiership points. There were jubilant scenes after the final siren as North conjured a win from nowhere with everything seemingly against them.



The enjoyable moment to savour the victory. Alleyway is chaired off the ground after the great comeback with (l-r): D. Stewart, K. Thompson, M. Clisby, A. Young, H. Mason, N. Gill, L. Ivens, T. Armstrong, T. Miles, G. Gallman, H. White, T. Delvins, L. Teasdale and J. Bennett

The *Sunday Mail* was full of praise in North's sparking revival:

- “As far as wins go, this one could barely have tasted any sweeter. Twenty-five points down late in the third quarter. Another heartwarming effort against a quality opponent poised to end with another near miss. Yet bottom side North Adelaide responded like a finals-quality unit to upset Woodville-West Torrens... yesterday;”
- “North came, faded, came again, faded and came again with a seven-goal final quarter that rattled the Eagles off their perch. Twice, maybe three times, they were pinned down and waiting for the killer blow. Each time they bounced up, kicked back and, in the end, showed more heart than their better-credentialed rivals.”

It was also fitting that the biggest kudos was granted to pint-size centremen **James Allan** who lifted the team each time it looked like the Eagles would break away. In a staggering performance, but one that North supporters had seen before and would see again, his statistics of 23 kicks, nine marks, 19 handballs (thus 42 disposals), six tackles and 1.1 epitomised his work rate but doesn't define the exquisite skills he conducted with those statistics to find teammates in a better position while covering a great amount of territory. (For Fantasy footballers his day would accumulate 162 points). The *Sunday Mail* summed up his game perfectly:

- “Fittingly it was best-on-ground **James Allan** who sealed it for North Adelaide, roving a deft tap from a boundary throw-in to stroll to 50m and put the Roosters 15 points clear with less than three minutes to play. **Allan** ended the match with a whopping 42 disposals, but this was more than just a show of accumulation.”

Whilst **Allan** led the way for North he was not alone in creditable performances. Youngster **Cohen Thiele** was superb around the flanks and found space to collect 23 kicks, 10 marks, 27 disposals and a goal, fellow midfielder **James Bennett** was all-conquering with 23 touches, four tackles but also proved a surprising goal-scorer by snagging four goals and the tall and gifted forward **Daniel Stewart** grabbed seven marks on his way to kick an important 5.1. Hard nut **Tim Delvins** was under all the packs dishing out handballs and **George Thring**, as an offensive half-back, rebounded all day with 23 touches. The umpires voted Eagles Luke Powell 3 votes but North's forward **Stewart** collected 2 votes and **Allan** grabbing the final vote.



Two of North's stars – the relentlessly brilliant James Allan and the left-foot prodigy Cohen Thiele



Finally a time to enjoy looking at the Woodville Oval after a match

The Aftermath

2011 would prove a defining season with North – sitting so low on the ladder for a long period of the season – nearly grabbing a finals position had results went their way in the final minor round. North lost eight games by 12 points or less but the foundation was laid for finals football in 2012 and 2013 only to miss premiership glory in the 2013 Grand Final by the hands of Norwood.

And sadly the graveyard ground of Woodville Oval remains a hoodoo for North Adelaide who has not won there since that glorious comeback victory seven matches ago. Which makes you certainly enjoy every win North achieve there!

Match Details:

North	2.5	6.5	9.7	16.8	104
Eagles	5.3	8.7	12.10	13.12	90
Ground:	Woodville Oval			Crowd:	2,347

Best Players: Allan, Bennett, Stewart, Delvins, Thiele, G. Thring

Goalkickers: Stewart 5.1, Bennett 4.0, Thiele 1.2, Delvins 1.1, Allan 1.1, Teasdale 1.1, Ryswyk 1.0, H. White 1.0, Young 1.0, Clisby 0.2

The Team:

F: Dale Armstrong, Clint Alleway, Daniel Stewart
HF: Cohen Thiele, Nick Gill, James Bennett
C: Leigh Ryswyk, James Allan, Henry White
HB: Tony Armstrong, Henry Mason, Mitch Clisby
B: George Thring, Todd Miles, Luke Ivens
1R: Cain Ackland, Tim Delvins, Greg Gallman
Res: Luke Teasdale, Kriston Thompson, Aaron Young

Stats Fact

- North's 16.8 (104) – 5th highest score (yet is also their 2nd lowest winning score) against Eagles at Woodville Oval;
- North's 7.1 (43) fourth quarter score – 4th highest kicked at Woodville Oval, 5th highest against Eagles (4th highest against Eagles at Woodville Oval);
- North's 14 point half time deficit – biggest comeback at Woodville Oval;
- North's 21 point three-quarter time deficit – biggest comeback against Eagles in any match;
- Eagles 13.12 (90) losing score – 2nd highest losing score against North at Woodville Oval;
- Daniel Stewart's 5 goals – equal second highest against Eagles at Woodville (M. Jeffries and D. Hargraves kicked 6 goals).

Round 10 Stats Fact

- Eagles 13.12 (90) losing score – 5th highest losing score.

David O'Hara
History Committee