

# ROOSTER REMINISCES

*A look back at a memorable match from each round*

## Round 4

**Season 1981 (Saturday 25 April)**



*Chris Pelle delivered a five-goal performance in the Roosters comeback victory in 1981*

You just can't beat a great comeback. Yeah sure winning by 100 points is a more enjoyable game when you have dominated the whole match from the first bounce to the final siren (and the panic of losing is never a thought) but the games to test *every* supporter at the ground with *every* emotion possible within the confines of four quarters of football is a spectacular comeback. From feeling dizzy with a victory in sight or a loss to digest, the half-time/ change sides emotional game when you suddenly face the opposite is an extraordinary experience for the players on the field, the coaching staff who are trying to juggle ascendancy or the supporters who may have just about ripped up their Football Budget. While North have certainly copped a number of come-from-behind losses throughout their history it was their turn to come from a position of playing for "pride" to glistening in the sun of an unexpected victory. We are heading to the Prospect Oval for the 1981 Round Four clash – North Adelaide versus West Torrens.

### **Background**

Despite both teams struggling to find finals consistency West Torrens were entering 1981 confident they can continue their previous season form which placed them 4<sup>th</sup> after the minor round. The Roosters finished 8<sup>th</sup> in 1980 nevertheless early season wins against Central District and West Adelaide provided some confidence in a more successful season.

### **The Match**

North Adelaide and West Torrens clashes are certainly not promoted like the Norwood and Port Adelaide blockbusters but it didn't deter over 7,000 Anzac Day enthusiasts attending the game at Prospect. In a pacy game the ball travelled up and down the field with regularity before the more accurate West Torrens began to take a stranglehold on proceedings by grabbing an initial lead of seven-points at the first change with North's inaccuracy (2.7) wasting any scoreboard pressure. The same applied in the second term as Torrens' dominance increased with their cleaner goal-scoring an integral reason for the 31-point break at half time. North were wasteful once again and ironically kicked the same score in both quarters (2.7) while Torrens precise goalkicking (7.1) were the result from supremacy around the ground. In fact, Torrens basically dominated the first half! For North midfielders **Greg McAdam**, **John Riley** and ruckman **Mick Redden** were battling manfully, youngster **Paul Arnold** was creative up forward and **Wayne Stringer** and the marking machine **Peter Cloke** were leading the defence. But put

simply Torrens were doing as they pleased and the match was basically “over” however it led to the *The Advertiser* pointing out:

- “Jubilant Torrens supporters, confident of a chance to brag were asking “How long is it since we won here?” The question was premature.”

A refresh was necessary for North to have any chance to get back into the game and winning the third quarter was crucial – and North did it in style. In an exhilarating onslaught the Roosters were simply superb to over-power a West Torrens who had no way of stopping the ambush. In a pulsating quarter North were keeping the goal umpires on their toes with an amazing 18 shots for goal with a staggering return of 11.7 with dynamic **Chris Pelle** kicking four of the 11 goals. West Torrens could only increase their score by 2.2 and suddenly – in 30 minutes – their comfortable half-time five-goal lead had not only been gobbled up but spat out to find themselves a strangely-looking 2.16 (28 points) in arrears with one quarter remaining. Emotions from both clubs turned around 180 degrees and suddenly it was the North players that were re-energised, playing with spirit and an air of confidence while their supporters, quite forlorn at half-time, suddenly finding voice, a spring in their step and the anticipation of a victory not considered moments before.



Young Trevor Grenfell promo prior the Eagles Round 4 clash

In the final term West Torrens tried to bridge the gap kicking 4.5 but it wasn't enough to threaten North's margin as they themselves kicked 5.4 to run out winners by 33 points.

*The Advertiser* was clear on whom the Roosters had to thank for the second-half recovery:

- “Ruckman **Mick Redden** and centreman **John Riley** led the revival. **Redden**, unsighted in the first half, should have been swabbed. Like (West Torrens ruckman) Galt in the first half, **Redden** was supreme in the last two quarters as he jumped over and around anyone who got in his way to launch North to victory. **Riley** kept persisting and things started to work for him as he began to find players with clever reflex handball and accurate kicking.”

The nonchalant centreman **Riley** picked up 26 disposals during his afternoon and was ably supported by **Greg McAdam** (30 disposals, one goal), while in defence **Peter Cloke** once again led the aerial display with 13 marks and 16 disposals and “the strong running and aggressive” Trevor Clisby was at his best.

Three-game lanky forward **Trevor Grenfell** used his stretch to cause concern for Torrens kicking four goals – with his four kicks for the match! Another youngster, Paul Arnold, in his 15<sup>th</sup> game, was one *The Sunday Mail* noticed as a one to watch:”

- “**Paul Arnold**, a youngster at centre half forward continues to impress and given a little more experience there he will be a fine player for the club.”

In fact *The Advertiser* was complementary to a number of North's forwards:

- “... **Paul Arnold** continued to be an enormous threat at centre half-forward. He was a consistent winner all day and with **Craig Stanbridge** and **Doug Algate** alongside him on the flanks picking up the tempo of the game and rover **Chris Pelle** creating his own brand of pain, Torrens cracked badly under the pressure.”

Zippy **Chris Pelle** finished the match with 21 kicks, seven handballs and a game-high 5.3.

*The Advertiser*, clearly conscious that North were in a period of change and youngsters getting opportunities, stated:

- “The North Adelaide players could become the victims of their own success. They are going to have to try to keep their feet on the ground while reaching for the stars. And that's not going to

be easy if they continue to play and win like they did against West Torrens at Prospect Oval on Saturday.

It was also noticeable that with the win it brought attitude to some North fans that would constitute "getting ahead of themselves" as *The Advertiser* continued:

- "As one smug North fan gloated when he spied some shell-shocked Torrens supporters after the game... "It's hard to be humble"."

### **The Aftermath**

The victory placed North into third position on the ladder and this jumper up to second after defeating Woodville the following week. However the season suddenly spiralled downward with North winning a further three games from their last 16 games to finish 8<sup>th</sup> and another summer to assess where the club is heading.



*Many of the Roosters players caught up in the above Round 15 skirmish later in the season were in the Round 5 comeback win including Trevor Clisby (No. 29), John Riley (obscured behind umpire), and Wayne Stringer (right). Mike Nunan (facing), Tony Roach (background) and Barry Stringer (looking at umpire) are other North players.*

### **Match Details:**

North	2.7	4.14	15.21	<b>20.25 145</b>
Torrens	4.2	11.3	13.5	<b>17.10 112</b>
<b>Ground:</b>	Prospect Oval			<b>Crowd:</b> 7,522

**Best Players:** Riley, Arnold, McAdam, Pelle, W. Stringer, Redden, Cloke, Clisby

**Scorers:** Pelle 5.3, Grenfell 4.0, Arnold 3.1, R. Robran 3.1, Gehling 2.1, C. Stanbridge 1.4, McAdam 1.2, Lokan 1.1, Algate 0.4, Tiller 0.1, Conder 0.1, Schlein 0.1, rushed 0.5

### **The Team:**

F: Rodney Robran, Trevor Grenfell, Chris Pelle  
HF: Craig Stanbridge, Paul Arnold, Doug Algate  
C: Russell Gehling, John Riley, Bill Lokan  
HB: David Tiller, Trevor Clisby, Wayne Stringer  
B: Stephen Molloy, Stephen Kerley, Peter Cloke  
1R: Mick Redden, Greg Schlein, Greg McAdam  
Res: Brenton Phillips, Dean Conder

**Stats Fact**

- North's 20.25 (145) – 5<sup>th</sup> highest score against Torrens at Prospect Oval;
- North's 11.7 (73) third quarter score – 2<sup>nd</sup> highest in any North match, highest against West Torrens and highest at Prospect Oval;
- North's 25 behinds – equal 7<sup>th</sup> highest in any match, highest against Torrens, equal 3<sup>rd</sup> highest at Prospect Oval and highest against Torrens at Prospect Oval;
- North 31-point half-time deficit (before winning) – equal 6<sup>th</sup> largest in any match and equal 2<sup>nd</sup> highest against Torrens;
- Torrens' 17.10 (112) – 3<sup>rd</sup> highest losing score by Torrens against North in any match and 2<sup>nd</sup> highest by Torrens at Prospect.

**Round 4 Stats Fact**

- North's 20.25 (145) – 8<sup>th</sup> highest score;
- North's 11.7 (73) third quarter score – highest score;
- North's 25 behinds – highest kicked;
- North-Torrens 257-point match aggregate – 7<sup>th</sup> highest total;
- Torrens' 17.10 (112) – 4<sup>th</sup> highest against North;
- Torrens' 7.1 (43) second quarter score – 7<sup>th</sup> highest score;

**David O'Hara**  
**History Committee**