

ROOSTER REMINISCES

A look back at a memorable match from each round

Round 13

Season 1926 (Saturday 14 August)

29 scoring shots to 15 would have the general footy supporter deduce that that clash was a one-sided contest with a very comfortable win for the victors. But alas in 1926 this proved nothing further from the truth. North's inability to kick straight and, in addition, never totally closing the victory door in the face of their opposition made the Round 13 game more exciting than it was possibly expected pre-game. Bad kicking is bad football and North's sloppy goal-shooting not only nearly cost them a game... but a spot in the finals!

Background

In 1926 only 14 minor rounds were played and North Adelaide and West Torrens were battling out for 4th spot and the last position for the four-team finals series. In Round 12 the Eagles defeated North to leave North hanging in 4th position just one point above them. With two rounds to go the two teams needed to win both games to have any chance of getting into the major round as both had "easy" upcoming opposition: Torrens meeting bottom-placed South and North taking on the Tigers who were sitting second bottom. It was simply a must win match for North.

The Match

Despite a finals position up for grabs North were sluggish when the game commenced. Glenelg were the first to score and in fact kicked the first two goals of the game before North began to hit their straps. In a fast opening term North finally settled and goals to **Bill Moyle**, **Bert Hawke** and **Percy Lewis** finally got some momentum their way. A late goal to **McDowall** gave North a handy 13-point break at the first change. Glenelg again grabbed the initial ascendancy in the second term before the red-and-whites settled down to play some entertaining football and certainly enough to provide ample scoring opportunities however "indifferent" kicking only resulted in behinds or out of bounds. Half-forward **Jim McDowall** was one that was noted for a brilliant run from the centre through to the goalmouth but a shank kick registered only one behind. **Peter Leahy**, captain **Percy Lewis** and North's 1926 leading goalkicker **Harry Fleet** – the latter two known as good shots for goal – also had shots at goal but could not convert. A late goal to Glenelg was an insult to North's dominance and left North ahead by six points at the main break – 4.9 to 4.3.

The second half started more defensively as both sides tried to get some control of proceedings before North, still poor in front of goal, began to dominate the game. Strong marking helped create scoring opportunities but still the six-pointers were hard to find. It took **Peter Leahy**, late in the term, to finally kick North's fifth goal. Norths had kicked 14 – yes 14 - consecutive behinds from the first quarter to **Leahy's** goal! *The Register* highlighted the biggest offenders in North's woeful scoring contributors:

- "Whereas **Fleet** had been the most unlucky northern goalshooter in the second quarter (four behinds), after the long interval the hoodoo seemed to be on **Lewis**, who worked into position and marked splendidly, but absolutely could not kick straight. Twice he kicked out of bounds, and then booted five of North's ensuring behinds."

In a see-sawing final quarter North's lead was continually cut back by Glenelg's relentless commitment and their own poor scoring efforts. *The Mail* covered in some detail the excitement of the final quarter:

- "North immediately assumed the offensive, and after behinds had been registered by **Townley** and **Thomas**, the sixth goal came from **Fleet**.... Roars of approval greeted a fine piece of play by **Conrad**, who marked brilliantly, near the centre, and running in, goaled with a prodigious kick.

Glenelg continued to play gamely, and Davies reduced their leeway by six points. When Hoft added another major Glenelg were 14 points in arrears;”

- “When Owens kicked a magnificent goal from an acute angle, the excitement became intense. Realising their danger, North began to exert themselves. Rushing goalwards, **Fleet** was placed in possession and he kicked accurately.”

When the final bell sounded North were nine points ahead and an important win was achieved – albeit closer than they had hoped. The win also continued North’s domination over the newly formed Glenelg who joined the SANFL in 1921 and who still had not defeated North in any of their 11 encounters.

The Mail highlighted the indicators that brought North their win:

- “Straight kicking by North Adelaide would have given them a substantial victory over Glenelg;”
- “In all departments, except kicking for goal, North were superior. Brilliant high marking, safe handling of the ball and the straight-through policy were features of their play.”

The Register was not backward in describing North’s poor efforts in front of goal:

- “It was quite the worst effort which their forwards have put up this season and very nearly proved their undoing. At one stage they kicked 14 consecutive behinds, and their total scoring for the second and third quarters was 1 goal 16 behinds. Consequently, when Glenelg put on a great spurt in the last term, they gave the red and whites such a bad time that the final bell came as a great relief to local players and spectators alike.”

In promoting best players it appeared by *The Mail* that North’s best players was shared by a few:

- “**Thomas** played a fine game on the ball, and often tricked his opponents with his pace and dodging tactics. **McDonald** was fast and sure on the wing, directing the ball forward with precision. In defence **Conrad** played his usual solid game. He marked and kicked brilliantly. **Fleet** and **Hawke**, frequently secured with nice judgment.”

The Register also thought the special goal by **Conrad** in the final term was worth recalling:

- “**Conrad**, in clearing from the half-back lines, found himself over the centre line, and let go with a magnificent drop kick, which went clean between the big posts for a goal.”

The Aftermath

The win proved an important victory as West Torrens also won their Round 13 game. Upon the final round both teams lost to finals-bound teams which allowed North to sneak into the finals series. Amazingly North went on to defeat Port in the 1st Semi Final by a handsome 37-points before going on to win the Final against Norwood. However back in those days with the Challenge System it allowed minor premiers Sturt – who lost to Norwood in the 2nd Semi – to Challenge the Finals winner. North battled diligently to go down by only 13 points.

North’s winning sequence against Glenelg would continue until 1931 before Glenelg’s first victory against them. By that time North had clocked up 23 successive wins.

Match Details:

North	4.2	4.9	5.18	8.21	69
Glenelg	2.1	4.3	4.5	9.6	60
Ground:	Prospect Oval			Crowd:	3,913

Best Players: Thomas, Conrad, Leahy, McDonald, McDowall, Fleet, Hawke

Goalkickers: Fleet 3.4, Lewis 1.5, Hawke 1.1, Moyle 1.0, Conrad 1.0, McDowall 1.0, Thomas 0.3, Townley 0.2, Leahy 0.2, McDonald 0.1, Willshire 0.1, rushed 0.2

The Team:

F: Harry Fleet, Percy Lewis, Bert Hawke
HF: James McDowall, Peter Leahy, Clarrie Willshire
C: Claude McDonald, Percy Furler, Henry Effick
HB: Darrell Conrad, Edward Morris, Robert Dilliway
B: Raymond Ween, Sydney Hyde, Edward Hargreaves
1R: William Moyle, Roy Townley, Billy Thomas

Stats Fact

- North's 8.21 (69) – 3rd lowest winning score against Glenelg at Prospect
- 129-point match aggregate – 8th lowest between North and Glenelg at Prospect
- North's 21 behinds – 5th highest against Glenelg at Prospect
- North's 9 behind (3rd term) - =2nd highest in a quarter against Glenelg at Prospect

Round 13 Stats Fact

- North's 21 behinds – =5th highest
- North's 9 behind (3rd term) - =2nd highest

David O'Hara
History Committee