

ROOSTER REMINISCES

A look back at a memorable match from each round

Round 17

Season 1934 (Saturday 8 September)



Caricatures of Frank Knuckey and Robert Taylor from The Advertiser – a feature within football reports during the 1930s

In a match which included 58 scoring shots (38 goals 20 behinds) you would envisage a beautiful spring afternoon with a nice warm sun on the faces of the crowd and only the slightest, if not any, breeze whispering across the ground. You would also naturally relate it to the high scoring frenzy of the 1970s and 1980s when attacking was the priority. But neither is further from the truth on this occasion. In reality we go way back in 1934 when North and West put on an unbelievable football game in the last minor round to complete their seasons in a match played in pouring rain on a very damp, very muddy Prospect Oval. And yet the astounding Mr. **Farmer** still couldn't help himself but kick a bag!

Background

The meeting between West and North in the final minor round spot had held some importance for both clubs. Sitting outside the top four both teams – with results in other games going their way – could still make a last jump into a finals position.

The Match

Captain **Ken Famer** won the toss and the red-and whites kicked North to start the game. West Adelaide was the first to gain some momentum and kicked the first two goals of the game before North replied similarly. This see-sawing start of the match pre-empted what spectators would witness throughout the course of the afternoon with both sides having bursts of three or four goals before the other team counter-acting them. **Farmer**, sitting on 93 goals before the match, was quickly doing what he did best kicking four of North's five first-quarter goals. In a high scoring first term both sides had kicked 5.2 in the tight battle.

Heavy rain in the second term took away spectacular marking but did not stop North's assaults:

- “As heavy rain began to fall, North went ahead for the first time with a strong burst. **Farmer** got the first goal with a beautifully judged shot from the outside of his boot;

Knuckey, Martin, and Hemers combine spectacularly to allow **Hemers** to add the second... Then **Farmer**, with a shot over his shoulder, put on his sixth goal” – *The Mail*

Not to be outdone West were also bothering their goal umpire and in despite the conditions getting wetter and the ball becoming harder to one-grab both sides were still putting on a high goalkicking display with West's 10.7 leading North's 9.2 by 11 points.

North made their charge for victory in the third term when they amassed 8.3 to West's 5.1 to transform the half-time deficit to a nine-point lead.

- “A well-sustained third term burst during which they overcame their earlier faults – failure to keep position and weakness in defence – put North ahead at three-quarter...” – *The Mail*

Early in the term the champion goalkicker brought up goal 100 for the season... not that everyone was as aware as the champ himself:

- “When **Ken Farmer** kicked his seventh goal for North Adelaide last Saturday, many of the barrackers wondered why he waved his arms in the air. It was nothing new for him to kick seven. Fans did not realise that it brought his total for the year to the 100 mark – the fifth year in succession he had reached it. **Farmer** did not stop at the seven, but went on and kicked 13 out of 16 possibles, and that on the wettest day for football experienced for some years” – *The Advertiser*

By the time the last quarter commenced news of expected conclusions at other grounds meant that neither North nor West could make finals which affected the player's enthusiasm. Despite the margin remaining close North would end victors in the high-scoring afternoon.

- “In a closely fought match North safely held West in the last quarter, and although only two goals separated the teams at the finish, North never looked in danger of defeat. A feature of the match was the accurate kicking display of both teams, and 38 goals were scored out of 58 scoring shots with a sodden ball” – *The Mail*

Best of ground was clearly **Ken Farmer**. He kicked 13 goals from 16 shots, two of which went out of bounds with his quarter breakdown of 4, 2, 3, 4.

Farmer, and the record of breaking the century goalkicking mark once again, was clearly worthwhile of having an emphasis placed on his match and the scribes of the day had pleasure in recalling his exploits:

- “For the fifth successive season **K. Farmer** (North Adelaide) has kicked more than a hundred goals. This feat is unapproached in the Australian rules game. On Saturday he kicked 13 goals in the mud to bring his total to 106... **Farmer** finished this season with a wonderful burst of goalkicking, scoring 41 goals in the last four matches. His tallies for these games were 11, 6, 11, and 13” – *The Advertiser*
- “From all angles and distances, **Farmer's** shots found the goal on Saturday, and although the public is accustomed to freak kicks by this player, some of his efforts on Saturday astounded many of his most ardent supporters. He was one of the few players who was able to mark the wet ball and this factor played a large part in the North Adelaide successes in the third quarter” – *The Advertiser*



H. BURNS, North half-forward, who has played well in recent league games.



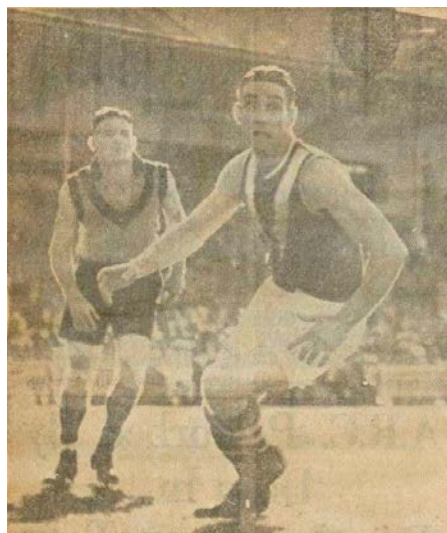
Herbert Mangelsdorf (left) watches teammate Robert Taylor clear North's defence against Sturt earlier in the 1934 season

A number of other notable players in North's victory were also justified to have praise placed on their performances as well:

- “**Knuckey** played very cleverly at centre, and, in spite of the fact that he was playing on the muddiest part of the ground, he showed great speed in getting the ball down to the forward lines” – *The Advertiser*, while *The Mail* stated, “**Knuckey**, after a quiet opening, dominated the centre after half-time. His sure marking and driving kicks were responsible for many North advances.”
- “**MacKay** proved too much for Shea (West) on the wing, and did his side great service” – *The Advertiser*,
- “**Hemers** roved in great style for North. His smart clearing dashes from the packs started North forward repeatedly” – *The Mail*;
- “**Strauss** did some good defensive work” – *The Advertiser*,
- “The sides were remarkably even in almost every respect, the clever work of **Farmer** at full forward and of **Knuckey** at centre being the factors which decided the game in North's favour (sic.)” – *The Advertiser*

The Aftermath

North late season good form provided four successive wins to finish the season however missed the finals by one point due to Sturt winning their last round to hold North out. North still held the second best percentage but missing the finals – the first time since 1929 – brought about the end of the powerhouse club of the early 1930's which stemmed two premierships from three grand final appearance.



Ken Farmer, here against Glenelg two weeks earlier, was at his irresistible best against West Adelaide

Match Details:

North	5.2	9.2	17.5	20.10 130
West	5.2	10.7	15.8	18.10 118

Ground: Prospect Oval **Crowd:** 3,709

Best Players: Farmer, Hemers, Batt, Rush, MacKay, Knuckey, B. Burns

Goalkickers: Farmer 13, Martin 2, Hemers 2, Nettlefold 1, Melvin 1, Batt 1

The Team:

F: Ernest Nettlefold, Ken Farmer, Devon Batt
HF: Brian Burns, Owen Martin, Herbert Mangelsdorf
C: Ken Burns, Frank Knuckey, Jackson MacKay
HB: Robert Taylor, Sidney Burton, Thomas Rush
B: George Foulis (100th game), Harry Fleet, Angas Strauss
1R: Rex Walter, Royce Melvin, Leslie Hemers
Res: Robert Barrett

Stats Fact

- West's 18.10 (118) – West's 4th highest losing score against North and 3rd highest losing score at Prospect;
- 248-point match aggregate – 10th highest between North and West at Prospect;
- North's 8.3 (51) third quarter score – 8th highest kicked for a 3rd quarter against West and 6th highest against West at Prospect;
- Ken Farmer's 13 goals – =7th highest kicked in any match by any North player, =5th highest by a North player at Prospect and highest by any North player against West.

Round 8 Stats Fact

- West's 18.10 (118) – 2nd highest losing score;
- 248-point match aggregate – 8th highest aggregate;
- North's 8.3 (51) third quarter score – 3rd highest kicked;
- Ken Farmer's 13 goals – =2nd highest kicked.

David O'Hara
History Committee