

WHAT MADE THE 1973 TIGERS TEAM SO GOOD?

Back in 2003, on the 30th anniversary of Glenelg's unrivalled 1973 premiership campaign, Peter Cornwall and Andrew Capel tracked down the players and coach from one of the greatest teams in SA footy history. Asked 'what made the 1973 team so good?' and for memories of the epic grand final against North Adelaide, they provided plenty of insights.

NEIL KERLEY (COACH)

What made the 1973 team so good?

We were a very close unit and didn't suffer a lot of injuries. There were some wonderful players and a few who had career-best years, blokes like Kerry Hamilton, Greg Wickens and Greg Bennett. Wayne Phillis, Brian Colbey and Graham Cornes were all terrific and our centreline of Millard, MacFarlane and Marker was superb.

Grand final memories

In the last quarter, with five or six minutes to go when things were going wrong, I can remember Peter Anderson's great clearance from defence, Jim Rawson's smother, Marriott's kick just inside the boundary line and Cornes's big mark and goal. Carey's performance at centre half-forward on a top-quality player in Neil Sachse was fantastic and Hamilton was good all day. And then there was Bob Tregenza's simply unbelievable effort to virtually ruck all day with a little bit of help from Caldwell. He absolutely ran himself into the ground. If you were looking for a bloke with guts and determination, he had it.



Coach Neil Kerley felt every bump on the boundary line and when North snatched the lead late in the last quarter, it was almost too much to bear.

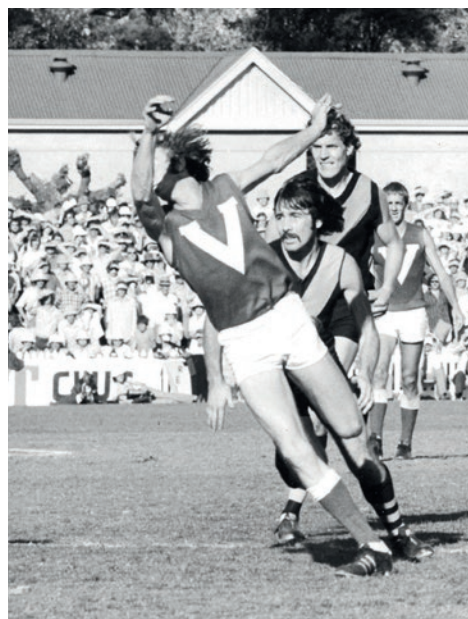
PETER MARKER (CAPTAIN)

What made the 1973 team so good?

Good coach, good players.

Grand final memories

Admiration for Bob Tregenza. And relief.



Inspirational Tigers skipper Peter Marker watches the ball as it eludes everyone in the middle of Adelaide Oval.

Laurie Rosewarne (VICE-CAPTAIN)

What made the 1973 team so good?

Huge team spirit ... everyone wanted to win for each other.

Grand final memories

I was on the bench with Neil Kerley at the end and it was the greatest feeling ever. I was very disappointed not to play because I injured my hamstring in the second semi-final. If I had played I could have broken down and we may not have won it so it was the right decision I didn't play.

JOHN MACFARLANE

What made the 1973 team so good?

Neil Kerley changed his style of coaching before the 1973 season ... he was a more relaxed coach and better thinker of the game. There was incredible camaraderie in the team from top to bottom.

Grand final memories

I wasn't in the game in the first half - I was overawed - but Kerls gave me a rocket at half-time and I was alright after that.

BOB TREGENZA

What made the 1973 team so good?

It was a very close-knit club. Neil Kerley was very inspiring, very approachable and down-to-earth. He wouldn't ask you to do anything he wouldn't do.

Grand final memories

After North took the lead Peter Marker ran past and said "we're not dead yet ... keep fighting". It was a relief when Graham Cornes kicked his goal. When John Sandland took his mark that was when I thought we had won it. I was pretty dehydrated. We went to the Haven Hotel and I said to Kerls, "I'm going home ... I'm too crook to celebrate. I'll celebrate tomorrow."

PETER CAREY

What made the 1973 team so good?

Neil Kerley started rebuilding the side after the 1970 grand final loss. He introduced some good young players and guys like Marker, Cornes, the Phillises, Voigt and Colbey who were young players in the 1969-70 grand finals had become very good, experienced players.

Grand final memories

It was a warm day and I was worried about running out of legs. I just didn't want to let the coach down ... I wanted to do it as much for Neil Kerley as myself.

JOHN SANDLAND

What made the 1973 team so good?

We had talent all over the ground. Neil Kerley's motivation was a big factor.

Grand final memories

I remember taking that last mark. I knew the siren must be going to go soon so I intentionally delayed walking back and taking the kick. As I started to run in the siren went and I was happy I didn't have the pressure of having to kick the goal. I was happy to think Graham Cornes kicked the winning goal but I kicked the last goal.

COLIN ANDERSON

What made the 1973 team so good?

The quality of the playing list. We had so many good players.

Grand final memories

I missed the game with a broken jaw but I remember the oppressive heat and the tenseness of the match.

GREG WICKENS

What made the 1973 team so good?

The comradeship was certainly there. Billy Neil had us very fit and we played an all-out attacking game under Neil Kerley – we kicked lots of goals.

Grand final memories

I remember thinking when North hit the front we don't deserve to lose this ... and this gave me a steely resolve to win it. I looked into the eyes of the other guys and I was pleased to see the resolve in their eyes. I was in the goalsquare when Cornes kicked his goal and although it went through three-quarters goalpost height I nearly touched it I was that excited.

GREG BENNETT

What made the 1973 team so good?

We had very good players and bonded well. Neil Kerley also set new coaching standards that others would later follow.

Grand final memories

Graham Cornes marking and kicking the goal that put us back in front. The scene in the changerooms after the game also lives in my memory – because of the sheer exhaustion of the players.

KERRY HAMILTON

What made the 1973 team so good?

We were a tight group, there was a fair bit of talent and we had a good coach.

Grand final memories

I was a bit disheartened when North took the lead but it was a group that didn't lie down when the going got tough ... we still had time to get back and we had some hard blokes out there. Bob Tregenza was amazing, the way he rucked all day and I remember Jim Rawson's smother ... it really turned the game. After the game there were so many people on the ground you could hardly breathe. But it didn't worry us that much because we had won.

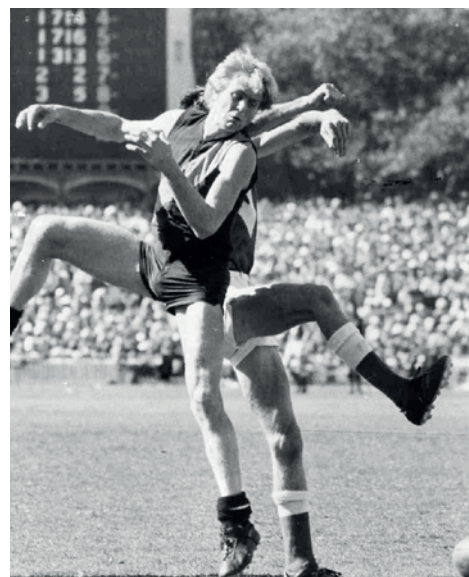
GRAHAM CORNES

What made the 1973 team so good?

Billy Neil brought a new level of fitness to the club and most importantly provided a conduit between the coach and players. And Kerry Hamilton had a great year.

Grand final memories

How hot it was, the way Bob Tregenza played his heart out and lying on the ground (after the mark) with the ball in my hands realising I had to kick the goal. After the game Neil Kerley told me how close he came to dragging me (because of cramp) in the last quarter.



Graham Cornes' socks were well-and-truly down and he suffered cramps late in a game played in torrid conditions.

PETER ANDERSON

What made the 1973 team so good?

The side had been together for a couple of years and everyone pulled together for a common goal – to win the flag.

Grand final memories

John Plummer kicking the goal and putting North in front in the dying minutes. The ball didn't come back into play so there was a lengthy delay until they got another one. The break allowed us to regain our composure and go on to win.

BOB TARDIF

What made the 1973 team so good?

We had a few 'speccky' players but the key was we worked well as a team. Everyone was prepared to do the hard things.

Grand final memories

The worst memory was injuring my hip in a collision with Jack Spry and being forced from the field. I'd played all 23 games for the year and when I had to go off I thought I'd let the side down. It is something I've never forgotten. When the final siren sounded there was sheer jubilation and relief all our hard work had paid off.

CRAIG MARRIOTT

What made the 1973 team so good?

We worked hard with Billy Neil so we were one of the fittest sides. There was plenty of aerial and on-ball talent. There was also a fair bit of experience and knowledge and it was a hard side. And Neil Kerley was in his prime as a coach.

Grand final memories

I wish they had an interchange bench in those days. I was dying to get on. I got on with 15 minutes to go and the heart was racing because the game was up for grabs. I remember (North full back) Bob Hammond went to push the ball out-of-bounds but I was lucky enough to duck in and grab it and kick it to where Graham Cornes took his mark. If anyone was going to kick a goal in this situation, it was him.

STEVE HYWOOD

What made the 1973 team so good?

The mateship, camaraderie. The team was very good but we also worked bloody hard and took nothing for granted.

Grand final memories

Bob Tregenza's terrific effort to ruck virtually all day. He wasn't the most skilful player but when Bob Tardif was hurt he stood up. He had the heart of a gladiator and was crook for four days after the game.



Jubilant Steve Hywood, left, and Wayne Phillis embrace coach Neil Kerley

WAYNE PHILLIS

What made the 1973 team so good?

The team had been building since the late 1960s and had a good mix of youth and experience. There was a lot of talent and some hardness. We also were very closely knit on and off the field.

Grand final memories

There were a few – the heat, Rawson's smother, Cornesy and Sandland's late goals. But Bob Tregenza's lionhearted effort to ruck virtually all day by himself in the heat was probably the main one. I still don't know how he did it. Lots of players were so badly dehydrated after the game they couldn't celebrate the win.

FRED PHILLIS

What made the 1973 team so good?

We had a group of very good footballers with a very professional approach. Because the player list was so talented there was always pressure for positions in the side, which meant everyone had to perform at a high level every week.

Grand final memories

Cornesy's mark late in the game which put us in front and Bob Tregenza's tremendous effort to virtually ruck all day in the heat.

BRIAN COLBEY

What made the 1973 team so good?

We had so much confidence in the whole team ... we didn't think we were ever going to get beaten.

Grand final memories

It was the most amazing feeling ... there was so much satisfaction to finally win. And all the crowd coming on to the oval was unbelievable.

NEVILLE CALDWELL

What made the 1973 team so good?

We were a very good team – literally. The players got on well together and knew each other's movements on the field.

Grand final memories

The heat, the atmosphere. Cornesy's mark and goal stick out but Jim Rawson throwing himself across Terry Collins' boot and smothering his kick stopped them dead. I knew then we had won.



Neville Caldwell dashes away from North's Bob Hammond as Fred Phillis lends support in the grand final epic.

PETER MILLARD

What made the 1973 team so good?

There was a good balance of skill and toughness. There were players who were hard like Anderson, Rawson and Colbey and one who had all the skill but didn't get as much credit was Kerry Hamilton ... he was a genius.

Grand final memories

All the fans charging onto the ground but we were still determined to do a lap of honour. But we were completely closed in and we got half way around and we could hardly breathe, so we gave up.



Wingman Peter Millard had 23 kicks to play an important role in the Tigers' hard-fought win.

JIM RAWSON

What made the 1973 team so good?

The fact we played for each other. Everyone was team oriented.

Grand final memories

The umpire unfairly penalising Fred Phillis for a push-in-the-back on Bob Hammond in the last quarter. Rex Voigt had kicked what would have been his eighth goal but the umpire disallowed it. I thought then it might not be our day. Fortunately, I was wrong.