

THE SWEETEST OF ALL

By Peter Cornwall



The excitement is building as the Bays are back for more.

It was the flag that wasn't supposed to be. And that's what made it so sweet.

In Glenelg's history there have been flags that have slipped away – 1975 and 1990 are two grand finals remembered for all the wrong reasons. But in 1986 the Tigers were written off – and all but counted out – as they chased back-to-back premierships. It only meant Graham Cornes' men dug deeper, the special camaraderie, spirit and never-say-die approach of a squad desperate to create history sweeping North Adelaide aside when it counted most.

Glenelg great Peter Carey is the only Tiger to have played in three premierships – in 1973, 1985 and '86. In 1973 strapping young centre half-forward Carey booted six goals in arguably the greatest premierships decider of all, the Bays winning a cliffhanger against North at Adelaide Oval. In 1985 he held aloft the TS Hill premierships trophy as Tigers captain after playing a key role in ruck as the Bays ended a 12-year premierships drought against the Roosters. But it is the 1986 flag that means most to him.

"That probably was my most enjoyable, memorable game," recalled Carey, who played a phenomenal 448 games for the Bays. "In 1973 I was just a new kid on the block ... it was fantastic but I probably didn't really appreciate it.

Then we had five losing grand finals between 1973 and '85, so in 1985 we just had to win it. The pressure to win it was enormous. It may sound peculiar but I'm not sure I got a real heap of joy out of it. I was home by midnight. I was just exhausted because of the nervous tension."

So, by the time the 1986 season started, there was a different feeling down at the Bay. "The pressure was lifted," Carey said. And when it came to the grand final, Carey recalled, "we thought we had a really good chance ... it wasn't like we had to win. There was a slightly different feel for me.

"After 1985 it felt like an enormous load had been lifted off our shoulders – we had finally won another premierships after losing so many grand finals."

So, after the 1986 triumph, Carey was ready to celebrate ... and with good reason. "Winning back-to-back premierships is an exceptional feat – there are not many sides that do that. It was an incredible thrill," Carey said.

When you look at the adversity the club overcame to win the '86 flag, it is not surprising 'Super' rated this triumph so highly. To start with, the Tigers lost Stephen Kernahan and Tony McGuinness from the 1985 premierships line-up.



Kernahan, perhaps the greatest footballer Glenelg has produced, went on to become the greatest leader Carlton has seen. Magarey Medallist McGuinness added best-and-fairest awards at Footscray and Adelaide to the one he had won at the Bay. With these greats lured to the Big V, critics wrote the club off before the season started.

If the Bays seemed unlikely then, by the time they had been thumped by 62 points by West Adelaide at Richmond and slipped to seventh after Round 8, some critics reckoned they were simply making up the numbers. One scribe likened them to the circus that was in town at the time, writing there were more tigers and fewer clowns in the big top than there had been wearing black-and-gold jumpers that day.

"We had a far different build-up in 1986. We struggled early, a lot of people said we couldn't win without Stephen Kernahan and Tony McGuinness," Carey said. "We were 3-5 and Cornesy tried some unique things to try to turn us around." There was the famous cream bun fight that "made a hell of a mess of the changerooms" and the coach let his hair down and took the players on a boys' night out.

Top Left: It's grand final fever time as Glenelg Oval comes alive for Thursday night training before the 1986 premierships decider.

Above: The view from the north-eastern pocket in the outer at Football Park as the Bays are making it back-to-back.

"We had a lot of work to do but as the season progressed we thought we were in with a chance," Carey said. The Bays had to make history to win this flag, becoming the first side to lose 10 games in a year and finish on top of the heap. The pressure of losing grand finals was gone, all the Collingwood jokes had dried up and Carey had found an added motivation. "We had got rid of the horrible stigma of losing grand finals, we were more relaxed, didn't feel the same level of pressure," he said. "The comment we only won because of Stephen Kernahan (in 1985 when he won the Jack Oatey Medal for his seven goals) stuck in the back of my mind." He thought he could throw that one back in a few people's faces.

Glenelg staggered up from the canvas, regained the composure of the 1985 season and swept into a second semi-final showdown with North. But again the Bays' season could so easily have come to nothing.

GLENELG FOOTBALL CLUB INC.

S.A.N.F.L. PREMIERS 1986



Back Row: W. Henwood, C. Duthy, J. West, A. Garton, J. Seebohm, M. Kruse, J. MacFarlane, D. Russell, D. Kernahan.
First Row: J. James (Director), J. Okely (Office Manager), P. Hood (Director), D. Brewster (Director), W. Elliott (Management), E. Betro (Director), T. Jaques (Runner), B. Scott (Management).
Second Row: J. Robinson (Management), B. Corcoran (Chairman), D. Staite (Management), S. Salisbury, C. Woodlands, T. Symonds, R. Gibbs, M. Donovan, G. Tanner (Management), J. Whittaker (Director), H. Kernahan (Football Director), R. Leahy (Team Manager).
Front Row: A. Stringer, T. Hall, C. McDermott (Vice-Captain), G. Cornes (Coach), G. Bignell (President), P. Carey (Captain), K. Hodgeman, W. Stringer, P. Reid, R. Kidney, D. Marshall (Deputy Vice-Captain).
Absent: S. Copping, P. Maynard.

The Roosters beat Glenelg by 3.6, which added to the belief they would win this one after claiming their second successive minor premiership. Then Malcolm Blight's Woodville, swept onwards by a flood of support from neutral supporters after six straight wooden spoons, looked close to producing the KO blow in a seesawing preliminary final. But, like Muhammad Ali and his famous rope-a-dope tactic in the world heavyweight title fight against George Foreman in Manila in 1975, the Bays simply took everything that was thrown at them, then, when seemingly down and out, hit back with staggering force.

They overcame Woodville by 21 points, then set their sights on the Roosters, who were expecting redemption after the humiliation of grand final day 1985. North did not know what hit it. Like Ali, Glenelg "floated like a butterfly, stung like a bee".

In the 1985 grand final Glenelg, weighed down under the pressure of having lost its previous five grand finals and by huge expectation, took until midway through the second quarter to get into its stride. The 1986 grand final was won by midway through the second quarter.

"Everything went right," Carey recalled. "I had about five free kicks in the first quarter ... and that seemed like more than I'd had all year." Like the floating butterfly Glenelg was pretty to watch, all the skills of running team football on display. Follower Peter Maynard had the ball on a string in the first quarter, goaling on the run, then snapping a left-foot goal from deep in the pocket. By the time wingman Tony Symonds had marked running into oncoming traffic without flinching, then, without breaking stride, goaled on the run, Glenelg led 10.2 to 3.2 and the premiership trophy was heading to the Bay again.



HINDMARSH ADELAIDE

NORTH	12	15	87
GLENELG	21	9	135

ATTENDANCE... 50,538
 THANK YOU FOR
 COMING. HOPE TO SEE
 YOU NEXT SEASON.

Peters Ice Cream Peters

AGC AGC AGC Good Bushells? B

They say a picture tells a thousand words - well this one sure does. The scoreboard, the smile, the crowd ...

Inset: Adam Garton and Peter Carey go to work unveiling the colours on the West End brewery chimney while Kym Hodgeman soaks up his first premiership win.



Like the stinging bee, the take-no-prisoner approach of players like Scott Salisbury, Wayne and Alan Stringer, Wayne Henwood and Chris McDermott left the Roosters looking decidedly groggy. Two tackles summed up the players' determination that this grand final would be remembered for all the right reasons. Kym Hodgeman, back after his successful stint with North Melbourne and about to realise his dream, threw himself at North skipper David Tiller, who appeared in the clear, hurling him across the boundary line. And McDermott's vice-like grip of Tony Antrobus stopped him dead in his tracks. They were examples of the Bays' willingness to do the hard, team things and one percenters that can prove decisive. Carey said the side's hardness "was incredible value. There was no doubt North was intimidated".

After Symonds booted his miracle goal in the second quarter he felt like he was floating on air as he sprinted back to his wing, a premiership in the bag and thinking the Jack Oatey Medal may be coming his way as well. "We had some fantastic players ... (the Jack Oatey Medal) probably wasn't as clear-cut as 1985 (when Kernahan won it)," Carey recalled. Tony Hall stood tall in the 1986 premiership decider and was adjudged best-afield. He not only filled the centre half-forward position that had seemed like a void when Kernahan had left, he made it a stronghold again, booting six goals.

Just before Carey lifted the premiership trophy with Cornes and McDermott, he declared: "It felt good last year ... it feels even better this year."

1986 GRAND FINAL

GLENELG
7.2 12.4 17.5 21.9
135

NORTH ADELAIDE
3.2 6.7 9.11 12.15
87

BEST: Hall, Carey, Maynard, Symonds, D. Kernahan, McDermott, Kruse

BEST: Hart, Robertson, D. Jarman, Sanders, J. Riley

SCORERS: Hall 6.1, Maynard 3.2, Symonds 3.0, Seebohm 2.2, Copping, Marshall 2.1, Hodgeman, A. Stringer, Kidney 1.0, Garton 0.1, rushed 0.1

SCORERS: Paynton 3.2, Hart 3.1, Robertson 2.1, Parsons 2.0, Antrobus 1.1, Bennett 1.0, D. Jarman 0.4, Dietrich, A. Jarman, Sanders, Arnold 0.1, rushed 0.2

UMPIRES: J. Hylton, R. Kinnear

CROWD: 50,538 at Football Park on October 4, 1986

JACK OATEY MEDALLIST: Tony Hall (Glenelg)

THE WINNING TEAM

- F:** Adam Garton, John Seebohm, Kym Hodgeman
- HF:** Stephen Copping, Tony Hall, David Marshall
- C:** David Kernahan, Alan Stringer, Tony Symonds
- HB:** Wayne Stringer, Max Kruse, Mark Donovan
- B:** Wayne Henwood, Chris Duthy, Ross Gibbs
- 1R:** Peter Carey, Peter Maynard, Chris McDermott
- Inter:** Robin Kidney, Scott Salisbury



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