

Sport

In Brief

Pies to wrap it up

COLLINGWOOD will play its last Victorian Football League match for the season on Saturday. The Magpies are out of finals contention and, with a Round 22 bye, this will be the last chance for AFL coach Mick Malthouse to tinker with his side before finals. Most other AFL clubs have their affiliates in VFL finals contention, except Geelong. The Cats are an outside chance to play VFL finals, but need to win both remaining games and rely on Box Hill losing to make September.

Blues still in the race

UNIVERSITY Blues still held fourth spot on the Victorian Amateur Football Association Premier ladder after defeating St Bedes-Mentone Tigers in Round 15, 12.11 (83) to 9.11 (65). But the Blues are under siege, with Old Carey equal on points in fifth spot and only slightly adrift on percentage. The pair met after deadline. In Premier B, University Blacks will miss the finals after losing to Old Ivanhoe, 12.10 (82) to 8.8 (56).

Werribee too strong

FC Clifton Hill slumped to seventh on the State League 2 soccer ladder after losing 2-1 to Werribee City last Saturday. FC Clifton Hill played Westgate after deadline and plays Moreland City on Saturday at Kevin Bartlett Reserve. In SL3 fixtures, Fitzroy City drew 1-1 with Frankston Pines while in North-West, Melbourne University Rangers secured their spot in the league after drawing 1-1 with Sydenham Park.

Victorian takes reins

FORMER Adelaide Thunderbirds assistant-coach Lisa Alexander has been appointed Australia's new national netball coach. The Victorian, 47, led the Melbourne Phoenix to back-to-back premierships, has coached the Australian under-21 team and was part of the Adelaide Thunderbirds ANZ Championship winning team as assistant coach. She is a teacher at Wesley College.

Victory falls in friendly

MELBOURNE Victory suffered a shock loss in the lead-up to the 2011-12 A-League season, falling 3-2 to Victorian Premier League team Bentleigh in a pre-season friendly at Olympic Park. It was a better hit-out for rival Melbourne Heart, which disposed of an Albury Wodonga XI 3-0.

Top Tiger's tales

Kevin Bartlett's son, Rhett, has put his father's many stories into a new book

Football | Patrick Lane

IT was appropriate Kevin Bartlett's book launch took place overlooking the MCG.

After all, the iconic turf was the playground the former Richmond great made his own for many of his 403 VFL games.

And the champions of eras gone by that were on hand to salute the famous Tiger's 50 years in football seemed as apt as the location itself.

It was a stunning who's who of football from another generation, with Ron Barassi, Tom Hafey and Kevin Sheedy just to name a few.

But, intriguingly, it was not the Bartlett who had penned the memoirs of his illustrious life but his son, Rhett. The younger Bartlett was just three years old when his father retired, prompting him to put his dad's "endless storytelling" into print.

"All I heard was all the stories he told about himself every day," Rhett told guests at the launch.

Rhett, who has included some 85 photographs never before published, said his father was a delightful subject to canvass.

"He has always had a tremendous knowledge of sport and football. I rarely had to correct him in any way," Rhett said.

"I found he would recall things that I would then go off and research, only to find that is exactly how they happened."

Sheedy, the former Essendon coaching great and current man at the helm at Greater Western Sydney, told the crowd Bartlett was one of the true greats of the game.

"He was always a great player and he always had the ball. You talk about the Abletts and the Judds today but he could take the ball from one end of the ground to the other. It was always better to have him on your side," Sheedy said.



Kevin Bartlett bursts through the banner, rather unsuccessfully it must be said, at his book launch. (Inset) Bartlett, Barry Richardson, Kevin Sheedy and the book's author, Rhett Bartlett. Pictures: SLATTERY MEDIA GROUP

KB: TIGERS LEGEND

Games: 403
Goals: 778
Premierships: 1967, 1969, 1973, 1974, 1980
Richmond Best and Fairest: 1967, 1968, 1973, 1974, 1977
Norm Smith Medal: 1980
AFL Hall of Fame member.

The man of the moment was a picture of pride during the event, but revealed to all he was in fact at first reluctant to be the subject of a book.

"I love Rhett very much and the reason I did this book is because he pestered me that much. There were phone calls all the time, he

sent me emails, text messages and I think he even rang me up on the radio program and I had to dump him one day," Bartlett said.

But his decorated football career has had its baggage, most notably being the Richmond favourite son's self-enforced exile from Tiger Land.

Bartlett shunned Richmond for 16-year period after his sacking in 1991, not returning to Punt Road until 2007. "The coaching journey was a marvellous journey for me, too. I enjoyed that enormously," he said.

"It was a great time, I enjoyed it immensely, but it was a tough time.

"It was a tough time and it ended acrimoniously I suppose.

It could have been some of my fault, it could have been some of the fault of the club, but it was a great period of time to meet a lot of terrific blokes who went on to have terrific careers."

But for Bartlett, just pulling on the Tigers jumper during the club's most golden era are the the greatest memories of all.

"To be at the Richmond Football Club in those days where they turned up every season... you turned up every season believing that one, you are going to be in the finals, and two, you are going to have a bloody good crack at winning the grand final and premierships," he said.

► **KB: A Life in Football is available now.**
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Long-time Ants fans have the Blues over news

VFL football | Sam Landsberger

CARLTON'S bumper deal to effectively take control of Victorian Football League club the Northern Bullants is not yet in stone.

Bullants general manager Garry O'Sullivan says a working committee is still finalising the new deal to continue the alignment, which would hand naming rights, club colours and an extra home game to the Blues.

But O'Sullivan warned if the deal did not eventuate it would spell the end for the long-time Preston-based football club.

"Nothing has been set in stone whatsoever, but that's what we're working towards," O'Sullivan said.



Preston Leader, August 2

"It'd be great to be able to stand on your own two feet, but the club just can't.

"The members have to come

onboard (with the Carlton plan). If they've got an alternative then please tell us what it might be.

"The only alternative we have is for the club to join a long list of (VFA) clubs that don't exist anymore.

"We don't want that, we want the club to survive and we need to align and merge with our current partner because we see that as the way forward."

Under the proposed plan the Bullants would be known as the Northern Blues, wear navy blue jumpers in most games and play only three home matches at the club's traditional home ground, Preston City Oval.

But the plan has been met with fierce opposition from some

Bullants fans. O'Sullivan said if that deal was struck with Carlton it would ensure the Ants' future for at least five years. "There are going to be some concessions probably, but Carlton need some recognition," he said.

"In the eight years (Carlton has) been aligned with the club they've ploughed in lots of resources and helped us immeasurably over that period, so they've got every right to consider they've been some recognition in the branding of the club."

The details are expected to be finalised post-September with both Carlton and the Ants in this year's premierships mix and no date has been set for a sit-down discussion with club members. "I've been through attempted mergers at AFL

level, name changes at AFL level and it's not new, but it is emotive, of course it is," O'Sullivan said.

"Fundraising as it is now is nowhere near good enough to keep this club going in its present form."

Asked if the club was in danger of sacrificing more home games to Visy Park in the future, O'Sullivan said nothing could be guaranteed but the club wanted to keep Preston as its spiritual home.

Carlton has previously requested to play all home games at Visy Park.

► **Should the Northern Bullants try to remain as they are or merge with the Carlton Football Club and become the Blues? Have your say online at melbourneleader.com.au**