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Intro Music

Hello and welcome to Grand Final history, in this episode we go back to 1935 the 39th season of VFL.

Let's have a look at some of the issues and news that football supporters in the 1935 might have been reading before or after they got to the sports section of their newspapers. After campaigns by activists re living conditions for the poor a delegation of state politicians including the premier Albert Dunstan made a tour of slums around Melbourne. A cavalcade of cars travelled through Fitzroy, Carlton, Collingwood and North Melbourne visiting people who lived in tin shanty's with no plumbing, in appalling conditions, all paying rent to landlords generating 25% return on their capital but not providing maintenance nor dealing with vermin nor addressing basic hygiene needs. Action was planned in the late 1930's but the World War II changed priorities and significant changes finally began in the 1950's and 60's with the sometimes controversial intervention of the Housing Commission.²

One of the greatest 45 minutes in sport occurred on the 25th of May in Michigan, USA. A 21 year old Jesse Owens set 5 world records and equalled another in just 45 minutes. While others might have matched him for number of Olympic Gold Medals, no athlete has ever matched this record breaking achievement, all the more remarkable as he had fallen down a set of stairs just ten days earlier bruising his back so severely his coach wanted to withdraw him from the race meeting. A special athlete whose name lives on today.⁴

1935's claim on progress cannot be ignored. In January the Gottfried Krueger brewing company in New Jersey launched the world's first beer cans. Australian drinkers would have to wait until 1958 but if you have ever drunk a tinny at the footy, or stood on them to get a better view, say thanks to 1935 and the brewers of New Jersey.³ Another innovation of 1935 was the Monopoly board game that went on sale for the first time.

If you don't like drinking beer or playing Monopoly while you wait for a match to start, maybe you fill in your time reading a paperback book about footy. 1935 was the year paperbacks were popularised by Penguin books in Britain. Until then books were generally only published as expensive hardbacks. Penguin paperbacks were cheap, easily carried and became massively popular.⁵

In the UK there were the first secret demonstrations of Radar and the first test flights of the Hurricane fighter plane which would prove useful as Germany announced they had reformed their air force and enlarged their army despite this being banned by the Treaty of Versailles. It was also the year of the Nuremberg laws that deprived German Jews of citizenship and made the Swastika the official symbol of Nazi Germany.

Adding international tension was the decision of Italy's Fascist leader Benito Mussolini to invade Ethiopia in October 1935. While in China, the Communist forces ended their Long March which had brought Mao Zedong to a prominent position in the Chinese Communist Party.

November saw Austrian Physicist Erwin Schrodinger publish his famous thought experiment on quantum mechanics now known as “Schrodinger's Cat”. I won't try to explain it here but I can say it has got nothing to do with the Geelong Football club, you could look up the Footy Almanac to explore Schrodinger's Club, an experiment on the duality of James Hird⁷⁵ but that all unfolded long after 1935.

While on Science the Nobel prize committee implemented their version of the Father Son rule many years ahead of the League, but in 1935 it was more a Mother Daughter rule, when Irene Joliet-Curie, daughter of Marie Curie was awarded the Nobel prize for Chemistry following in the footsteps of her mother, dual Nobel Prize winner, Marie Curie. ⁷ Three Nobel premierships in the one family.

That's some of what was going on in the world in 1935, let's focus on the footy now.

In a heroically optimistic prediction, a local soccer official, Mr J. A. Nelson forecast the death-knell of Australian football within 10 years, to be replaced by the Englishman's Winter Sport, Soccer. He based his forecast on the lack of support by the VFL for the youth of the city and used the progress of soccer in Albert Park as an example. Much easier to assess these things in hindsight, but fair to say, Mr Nelson's prediction has yet to come true.⁷³

January saw Footscray committee members focusing on what might now called crowd engagement. There would be community singing at matches, gramophone records would be played over amplifiers and loudspeakers and the committee was seeking club songs from supporters which could be used to arouse enthusiasm amongst the crowd and inspire their team. Forward thinking from the Bulldogs.⁹ It was clearly an enthusiastic committee, in February they decided to update the club jumpers. The new Guernseys would set a benchmark in awfulness not matched for decades. They had a blue base, a broad red vertical stripes edged in white, with a white V, white collar, blue sleeves with red and white cuffs.¹² The assault on supporters' and players' eyes lasted just one season, the distinctive jumpers were “accidentally” destroyed when dry cleaned at the end of the season. I will include a picture in the show notes on grandfinalhistory.au or check out the wonderful footyjumpers.com site for every clubs jumpers through every season and more.

In the modern era the fixture for each season is scrutinised by supporters assessing if their club has been treated fairly. For Example, who they play twice or how often and where they have to travel. Travel being a focus for Victorian based supporters who do not seem to worry about the travel burden for clubs outside Victoria. It was the same back in 1935. With an 18 round season not all clubs played each other twice, not all clubs had the expense and challenge of travelling the long distance to Geelong. As Delegates met in February to finalise the fixture both Carlton and South Melbourne protested they had, yet again, been drawn to visit Geelong. The Geelong Delegate, Morris Jacobs had little sympathy for their plight, saying, “We visit Melbourne every second Saturday”.¹⁰

Recruiting players is a critical element to building a successful club. Hawthorn adopted a novel approach, advertng for players. Clubs had traditionally advertised coaching positions but this was the first time players were invited to respond to an ad.¹¹ Hawthorn and North Melbourne had both struggled since joining the league and both been given crucial loans by the VFL at the end of 1934. Things came to a head in a stormy delegates meeting in February. North wanted to identify which delegates had discussed eliminating the two clubs. Such discussion made recruiting new players even harder for these embattled teams. After some challenging conversation the meeting agreed to provide a letter to the effect that the league did not contemplate elimination, at present.¹⁴ Melbourne supporters had feared the worst at the end of 1934 when impressive first year player Jack Mueller had lost the top of two fingers on his right hand in a work accident. Yet things looked better in February when the Sporting Globe carried news that he was ready for the new season. He would wear a glove to protect his hand and we will hear much more about this young man.¹³

Speed has always been important when chasing that all important signature from potential new recruits. Essendon's secretary was heading to Tasmania on the steam ferry to sign up former Footscray player Allan Rait. A competing club sent their man to Tasmania on an aeroplane, passing the ferry and landing many hours ahead. It was all in vain, despite the expense, Essendon got the signature. It all came to nothing anyway, Tait would not play another VFL game but air travel became another tool for a recruiter chasing that gun player.¹⁵

The Tigers could not get access to the Punt Rd Oval for practice matches in March because of Cricket club commitments so the club decided to use the Olympic park ground, formerly known as the Motordrome, where the AAMI park soccer and rugby stadium is now located. The Olympic Park re-branding had occurred in 1933 to when the management committee thought Olympic Park better reflected the variety of sports played at the ground¹⁶. So the name was well established long before the Olympic Games eventually came to town in 1956.

However, Olympic Park was being used for an athletic meeting on the Saturday afternoon but the entrepreneurial Ground manager suggested a night game. Richmond and South Melbourne both agreed and got league permission for the experiment, the first night football game played between VFL clubs.

25,000 people came to a practice game, a grand final replay, under lights. While the first football under lights had been a demonstration in 1897 with battery powered lamps at the MCG providing something between strong moonlight and twilight, the Olympic Park lights were modern and provided "Lighting so perfect that not even a shadow was cast onto any player" and "the white ball was never out of sight" Players handled the ball cleanly but some marks were mistimed as some players had difficulty judging the descent of the ball. While other players such as Jack Titus said he could see the ball clearly when kicked high but had more problems with short passes. Despite some teething problems there was much optimism in some corners on the potential for night games.^{18, 19}

A Spotting Globe Reader, Mr Malcolm Semple, wrote to the paper with a suggestion that the teams that do not make the finals could play a night series after the season. The VFL would eventually start this type of Night series at Albert Park in 1956, not sure if Mr Semple ever got credit for his vision in 1935, 21 years ahead of the VFL.²⁰

But after the flurry of enthusiasm from the supporters, press and Richmond and South Melbourne, the realities of league politics intervened to stop any further night practice games. Two issues were at play. First, in what seems odd to our modern eyes, there was opposition to practice matches between league clubs. They might diminish interest in the premiership games when the season started if clubs had already shown their form in practice games. Practice games were either intra club affairs or against VFA or country clubs. But the stronger objection was from the weaker less financial clubs who objected to the bigger clubs generating more money for themselves. Even though the funds raised at the Richmond South game were earmarked for players' end of season trips. Not for the first and not for the last time, rivalry between clubs impacted decision making by the league.²²

In this era there was a high turnover of coaches, 1935 saw seven clubs appoint new coaches in their search for premiership success. Dan Minogue had coached Carlton since 1929, making the finals every year but the last, they had been runners up in 1932 but his time was up, replaced by Frank Maher, a dual premiership player at Essendon, he had won two premierships as captain coach of Oakleigh in the VFA before coaching Fitzroy in one of their more successful periods, without making finals and now had his chance with the Blues. Dan Minogue was a dual premiership Coach having led the Tigers to success in 1920 and 21 and a now a veteran coach His 15th season as coach would be with St Kilda, Colin Watson stepping down after one season as Captain Coach. Fitzroy would go into 1935 with dual Collingwood premiership player Percy Rowe. Percy had taken

some of the Collingwood lessons to Northcote in the VFA. In five seasons as captain coach he won three premierships and was twice Runner up. That's the sort of record Fitzroy used to have in the early years of the VFL and they hoped Rowe could bring that success with him. Geelong looked to former Fitzroy three time premiership player Percy Parratt. Hawthorn had not had success with former Collingwood player Bill Twoomey Snr so after just one season they switched to Ivan McAlpine as Captain Coach. I think its fair to say that Hawthorn's issues went deeper than whoever the coach was, Ivan started his playing career with Footscray in 1927 and was captain their in 1933 but his job at Menzies Creek made it hard to get to training so he switched to Hawthorn. At the other cellar dweller North Melbourne, Tom FitzMaurice premiership player at Essendon and Geelong had taken over the coaching role mid season in 1934 and he was appointed for Captain Coach for 1935, Alby Morrison was reappointed for 1935 at Footscray but let's just watch that space.

The previews before the opening round were full of confidence for an exciting new season with the two months of preparation by the clubs, the sifting of recruits, and expectation of better football in season 1935. The league delegates met on the Friday before opening round. On the Agenda was the merits or otherwise of rubber footballs that had been trialled in some of the practice matches. While they had some advantages in wet weather, especially as only one ball was used for the entire game resulting in a heavy, sodden leather footy, the rubber alternative was not satisfactory on dry days, It was tricky, lively and fast. Delegates voted to defer any final decision for 6 months and the rubber balls never replaced the traditional leather air conveyance.

In a move that might be considered Woke by some or progress by others, and just sensible by many it was recognised that the new membership category for Schoolboys was also attracting a number of schoolgirls who wanted to watch their team on a regular basis. The Schoolboy tickets would be updated to School tickets available for boys and girls alike.

113,000 spectators made their way to the six opening games on the 27th of April and there was no shortage of excitement and drama.

The only one sided game saw Essendon make a compelling statement at the MCG, beating Melbourne by 10 goals. Tommy Lahiff Debuted for the Don, he would have a long playing and coaching career before becoming a radio icon as a partner for Harry Beitzel. It was also a day out for Essendon's Ted Freyer who kicked 12 goals, a nice way to get the season started. Richmond had to travel to Footscray for their first game and it was close for three quarters but the were too strong in the last quarter. Perhaps the Bulldog supporters needed to work harder on their songs.

North Melbourne did not win a game in 1934 and their opening round game against Hawthorn proved, yet again, how cruel football can be. Despite a strong last quarter they fell short by just four points. North actually hit the front with 90 seconds left on the clock but a final push forward resulted in the final vital Goal for the Mayblooms. The drought breaking win was still some time off for the boys from Arden Street. Hawthorn supporters could point to their wonderful accuracy as a reason for their win, a very efficient 14. 3 to North's wasteful 12. 11

There was trouble at Geelong where it looked like they might have to forfeit before the game started. The problem centred on Lindsey Lamb, selected for his second game after playing in 1933. He had been declared "Black" by the Geelong Waterside Workers Federation because he allegedly worked as a volunteer during the meat strike three years earlier. Five members of the Geelong team asked that Lamb be omitted from the team.

Geelong's president went into the dressing room and appealed to theh players to stand by the club. Lamb had been selected and he would play. The club would not be dictated to by outsiders. Anyone who chose not to play would lose their football careers. Geelong would not select them nor clear them. The team went out as selected and won a memorable game. With only 17 men on the ground and 12 points down with 10 minutes to go, they managed to win by one goal on the last kick of the

day. Lamb played the next two games before being dropped. It is not clear whether it was form or outside pressure that ended his short career.^{25, 26}

Fitzroy looked they had a win in the books at three quarter time they were six goals up against St Kilda but the Saints came home with the proverbial wet sail, falling short by just 12 points. It was a win for the Maroons but it showed you can't relax until the game is over. And the match at Victoria Park between Collingwood and South also proved the game is not won until it's over.

The Magpies were entering a new era with the departure of Syd Coventry but sometimes one legendary leader can be followed by another icon of the game. Harry Collier was born a stab pass from Victoria park. He had sold footy records with his brother Albert, kicked footys on the ground after school, made his debut in 1926 aged 18, played in four premierships, won two Copeland medals and tied for a Brownlow. He had big boots to fill following Syd Coventry but he was the man to do it and he had his brother Albert as Vice Captain.

In front of a 30,000 supporters the new look Collingwood were nine points down with just moments to go. Marcus Whelan passed to Phonse Kyne who goaled. After the centre bounce Keith Fraser passed to Vin Doherty who kicked it to Lou Riley. Riley kicked straight and as the ball went through the goals the bell rang. A three point win snatched from the jaws of defeat and the five players who finished the game had all joined the club in the last two years. The Machine was being revamped with some new parts. The win was particular sweet for Riley, he had a chance to win the semi final against South in 1934 where he also had the last kick of the day, but on that occasion the ball veered off for a behind. Today he had made some amends.

There was more drama at St Kilda after round one. Colin Watson's pre-season had been confusing to say the least. He had missed a practice game against Northcote and then said he had no definite plans to play the season, then said he would play but not captain and then accepted the captaincy before the first round without having played or trained with the club. In his resignation letter he applied for a clearance to South Warrnambool so he could help the players there. Watson had a dairy farm in Warrnambool and playing for St Kilda meant he had to pay someone to milk the cows when he was away. With a £5 per week offer to captain coach Warrnambool the financial position was compelling and even an athlete as gifted as Watson was going to have trouble keeping up to league pace at his age.^{27,28}

Hawthorn also had a shock for their supporters after round 1. A special committee meeting decided that unless the club could get more support from the local community in terms of memberships they would consider withdrawing from the league. A membership drive was required to keep the club financially viable. It was going to be a big week in Hawthorn, and they had actually won their first game of the season.²⁹

Round 2 was a split round with a special Monday holiday to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of King George V. Richmond had their first home game of the season and unfurled their premiership pennant in front of North Melbourne. It was a rugged game and although the Tigers won they had not impressed, North kicked 6 goals in the last quarter showing some improvement but still not enough to win a game.³⁰

Fitzroy and Collingwood played out a thrilling draw. The Maroons had taken the lead with a 6 goal third quarter but the last term was tense as Collingwood got themselves back in the game. In the very last moments Hayden Bunton called for a pass from Dinny Ryan rather than letting the lad have a shot. Bunton missed the pass and the ball went to the other end of the ground. Collingwood forward Allan Ryan was grabbed around the neck and given a free. The Bell rang, the crowd invaded the ground, Some Fitzroy players congratulating themselves on the win while others players crowded the front of the goal. A mounted trooped cleared a path for Ryan to take his shot while his team mates also shepherded the crowd away. It was chaos and yet his kick was straight

and true, a goal, a draw and Ryan carried from the ground on the shoulders of his teammates. For the second time in two rounds Collingwood had avoided defeat on the last kick of the day.^{31, 32}

Round 4 delivered a moment in football history unlikely to be matched. Many players dream of kicking a goal with their first kick, quite a few have kicked two in a row and some have kicked 3 on the trot but Clen Denning, playing his first game for Carlton against South Melbourne, the team that had played in the last two Grand Finals, did something no other player has done in all the seasons of VFL/AFL football. Six goals with his first six kicks. His first came from a pass from Ron Cooper, Was it because Clen was in a better position or because they worked together as Linesman for the city council, It was a day to remember for the boy from Oakleigh.²⁴.

Before Round 5 Footscray announced that Gordon Coventry was taking over as coach. Albert Morrison resigned as coach but would continue as captain. Footscray had been trying to get Coventry as coach for years. In 1930 they had announced he was captain coach but Collingwood would not clear him and Coventry led the Magpies to another premiership instead. But now his playing days were over and Collingwood wished Syd and Footscray well, even though they were sad to see him leave.³³ Brother Gordon showed Syd no mercy in the Round Six game against Footscray, kicking 9 goals to take his career tally to 1,100. Did Syd appreciate his brother's achievement or regret the Bulldogs weak backline?

After round six the season was one third complete and Collingwood were undefeated on top of the ladder, five wins and one draw. South and Richmond followed on five wins each then Carlton and St Kilda on four wins. Fitzroy Geelong and St Kilda were still in touch with the top four but Melbourne, Footscray and Hawthorn only had one win each North were yet to trouble the scorers and like 1934 they got close in a couple of games losing by less than a goal

Collingwood had a challenge in their Round 7 game against St Kilda but it was not on field. Like Geelong in Round one, the issue was unions calling out the use of non union labour. The Liquor Trades union alleged non union barmen were engaged at the Junction Oval during football games. Many Collingwood players and coach Jock McHale worked at CUB and were members of the Liquor Trades Union and would have to comply with the back-ban on the St Kilda ground called by their Union. The Argus reported that Union officials described a discussions with the St Kilda Cricket Club as "far from harmonious". St Kilda football club declared it would play and it would not consider a change of venue.^{36,37} Saturday morning bought the sombre news that Collingwood were prepared to forfeit if a neutral ground could not be used or the dispute not be resolved. However there was good news that the St Kilda Cricket club had reached an agreement, due to the threat of a forfeit and pressure from football leaders. The terms of the agreement were not officially revealed but it was understood bar staff would be union members paid at award rates.³⁸ It was an era where union membership was far more prevalent and unions took action to protect the rights of their members, despite calls from some to keep unionism out of football.

Round 8 saw the next coach to fall, North Melbourne's Tom Fitzmaurice calling time as coach, captain and player. While relations with the club Board were cordial, Tom felt, after taking over for seven games last season and eight so far in 1935 without a win, it was time to give someone else a go³⁹. His playing career started way back in 1918 with Essendon where he won two premierships but he left the club after declaring the controversial 1924 challenge between VFL premiers Essendon and VFA premiers Footscray fixed after Essendon lost with accusations of players taking bribes.

He then won the 1925 premiership at Geelong and captain coached the Cats in 1928 before taking a break from the VFL. He had returned as a player with North in 1932 but not had any success as a player or Coach at Arden Street. It was a tough time for the club, finances were a challenge and the players had to accept a pay cut from £3 a game to £1 10/, club secretary Jack Adams said the players accepted the position "philosophically"⁴¹.

Former South Melbourne and Footscray player Paddy Scanlon took over as non playing coach for the remainder of the season. He would not get much joy. As June progressed rumours abounded that one league club had three players it would be willing to clear if it was paid. Nobody said it in print but clearly North was the club. Transfer fees were banned by the Coulter law but the principle was well known given they were standard practice in the English soccer leagues. There was resistance from those who saw this as yet another step to commercialisation and turning the game into a business. It will happen but officially not yet.

Mid June the Victorian team departed on their epic journey to Western Australia. 3,500 kms on multiple trains, leaving Melbourne on Tuesday afternoon and arriving in Perth, sick and tired Friday morning. The Vics had only won one game in the West over 50 years, so the challenge to the 1935 team was clear.⁴⁰ As the train made its way west there was time for card games, singing, gramophone records and, of course, practical jokes. More than one player woke up with boot polish smeared across their face and one jolly character impersonated the train conductor at 2.00am rousing many of the party for breakfast.⁴² The Vics one both games played on Saturday and Tuesday before they headed to Adelaide for a game against South Australia which they also won.⁴³

While in Adelaide the Victorian side were entertained at a new sport called night cricket. Four decades and more before Kerry Packer lit up VFL Park and the SCG with a white ball and coloured clothes, cricketers in Adelaide were playing a version of the game under electric lights. The field was smaller and tennis balls bowled under arm and scoring was similar to that used in modern indoor cricket. Seems to have been popular in South Australia but not sure if it was played elsewhere.⁴⁹

Meanwhile the regular season games progressed as usual.

Round 9 saw Collingwood lose their first game of the season at Carlton. This would have been news enough but the other news of the day was the stray dog that ran onto the field, holding up play until caught by Umpire Blackburn, after a bit of a chase. As he was carrying the dog off the ground it bit him on the hand, the umpire threw the dog into the crowd and saw out the rest of the game, occasionally shaking his hand in pain⁴⁷. He earned his money that day. It was a tough day for everyone. The weather was appalling with a gale and rain keeping many home listening to the radio, if they had one. Only 4,000 turned up at Punt Road to see Richmond beat Hawthorn, £55 at the gate was the lowest takings for 22 years.⁷⁶

There were other ways of ending up hurt and sore in 1935. Carlton's centreman Ron Cooper up in front of the tribunal in June He got four weeks but the President of Carlton Dave Crone thought he was Cooper had been unfairly treated. Firstly, in this era players had no advocates to help them argue their case or challenge the umpire's evidence. Adding to his situation was the fact he should not have been appearing at the Tribunal that night anyway. Turn away now if you don't like dental stories, In the previous week Cooper had 27 teeth extracted, 14 on the day before the Tribunal hearing. No mouth guards in 1935 and a different era of dental health.

July saw one of the football media's pioneers finally put away their pen. Reg Wilmot wrote under the Nom de Plume, "Old Boy". He had written on the game for 46 years, watching it emerge from the early seasons of the VFA, the split and growth of the VFL with crowds of 5 or 6 thousand at a grand final booming to 70,000. The league presented him with a Mahogany box, following the precedent set when Tom Kelynack, better known as Kickero, retired in 1930.⁴⁵

After 12 rounds the season was two thirds complete, South Melbourne were having another strong season and were on top of the ladder with eleven wins, Carlton and Collingwood were second and third both on 9 wins and a draw, Richmond was fourth, struggling compared to previous seasons on seven wins with St Kilda fifth just on percentage. It was a more even season than 1934 with

Geelong, Fitzroy, Melbourne and Essendon all close enough that they were still a chance for finals if they kept winning games and few other results went there way. The three former VFA clubs Footscray, Hawthorn and North again made up the last three spots with North yet to get a win,

Radio broadcasting of football was still a developing medium but, just as would happen later with the early years of television, there were fears crowd numbers were being reduced. Country League officials said many people preferred to stay home and listen to the VFL games rather than watching their local team. They wanted the VFL to follow the plan of the Victorian Cricket Association and restrict radio to short progress reports.⁵⁰ Radio, Television, Internet, it seems every new communications technology is going to be the ruin before it turns into a new way to promote the game and a revenue stream. But that's all in the future.

An interstate game with South Australia was scheduled for Saturday 28th of July but selecting the best Victorian team was going to be a challenge. Collingwood and South Melbourne taking an extended trip to Brisbane and Sydney to play three promotional games on that bye weekend. St Kilda and Richmond would be in Tasmania, Essendon and Footscray in Hamilton and Melbourne were heading up to Swan Hill. A great opportunity for supporters to see the VFL stars in the flesh in this pre TV era where even promotional film footage was rare. But there were a number of players from these teams who could not get leave from their jobs so they would be available to represent the State.⁴⁶

South Melbourne and Collingwood had the furthest to travel, some players who had been in the State team that went to Perth and Adelaide were seeing their country like few others of the time. Travelling interstate in this era was almost similar in scope and challenge to travelling internationally today, albeit without the need for passports. While Carlton were heading north to Brisbane on the train South Melbourne left the Footscray oval after a six goal win and, after a big send off at the North wharf with the players resplendent in blazers and red & white ties, they caught the steam ship Westralia to sail to Sydney on the first stage of an epic journey. The team was thrilled to sail under the Harbour Bridge and tour the sights of Sydney, including catching up with the Collingwood boys who had arrived at the train station before entertaining a large crowd by training at the SCG. Which would eventually become their home in another five decades. Collingwood continued by train while the Swans, water birds of course, caught the steamer Katoomba and sailed to Brisbane.⁵¹

While some like dual Brownlow Medallist Ivor Warne Smith questioned the value of mid season trips, suggesting that time away might distract players, taking their minds off serious football and weaken their grip on their will to win, Joch McHale had no doubt it was good for morale and binding the team together. He had seen it on the 1927 tour to Perth, the season that started their four premierships in a row and he expected good things from this journey too. Collingwood won the two games in Brisbane and Newcastle, despite some heavy nights celebrating before the game. Percy Bowyer said years later, "Len Murphy did all the damage. The night before we had been to a dance ... I had to help him up the stairs (on his return to the hotel). Then we came down to Newcastle and 'Leeter' (Albert Collier) had a night out. He didn't feel too good and McHale gave me his spot in the ruck. But the game in Sydney had Akubras on offer for each player on the winning team. South Melbourne won that game and the Magpie players were not happy.

Harry Collier spoke about the trip later, reflecting on how the Collingwood committee and coach saw it as an opportunity for the team to bond. Collingwood players could have as much beer, soft drinks and food as they wanted while South Melbourne players on the return train with the Magpies had been given nothing by their club. The Collingwood players shared with the Swans. Collier said "We were all cobbers in those days" but it must have shown the South Melbourne players how Collingwood was looking after their players, their team focused approach versus the South Melbourne method.^{52,53,54}

South arrived back in Melbourne suffering injuries which Swans management blamed on the rock hard surfaces in the North where rain had hardly been seen. Ivor Warne Smith pointed out the folly of not taking a "Boot expert" on the trip. The players were allowed to wear long stops on the field which resulted in avoidable injuries.⁵⁷ Collingwood players did not suffer similar woes because they had their boot studded with them. The Magpies were being better cared for both on and off the field on this trip.

While South and Collingwood were in Sydney they were entertained by Rugby Union officials. In the same week a New Zealand Maori Rugby Union team visited Melbourne and the VFL had arranged to allow them to play a Rugby Union game at Princess Park. At a very friendly welcoming reception the VFL Secretary Mr Lieke McBrien said they were "allied codes" and there was plenty of room for all. While he considered the Australian game superior he also said "The VFL would always be delighted to do any service for the Rugby Union in this state"⁵⁵. Not sure the AFL still has the same attitude.

The Victorians had an easy win against the South Australian side in front of 7,800 people on a cold Saturday afternoon. It did lead some to question the value of Interstate football when supporters clearly preferred to watch their club games.⁵⁶

Round 16 saw North finally win their first game since August 1933. A run of 35 consecutive defeats was broken with the Northerners finished the game in front after a hard fought struggle against Footscray. It was a seven point win and the celebrations continued long into the night.

Round 16 saw South have a comfortable win over Geelong and Bob Pratt kicked 7 goals. Nothing unusual there. However there were no celebrations at South after the game, Bob had to get to the All Saints Church in East St Kilda by 7.00pm, past the crowd that were gathered outside, to make it to his wedding. He got there on time and so did his team mates.⁵⁹

The issue of how to address inequality of clubs continues to bubble along in later part of the season. There was the suggestion for a limit on the number of players a club could have on its books. This would free up some players, almost being hoarded by the stronger clubs to play for other teams.⁶¹ Just as in previous years the option of pooling gate receipts was proposed only to be knocked down by the bigger clubs, who suggested that clubs had to raise themselves. Hawthorn's Secretary Mr Roberts made some valid points on why this was not so simple. Travelling to regional areas to recruit players cost money that Hawthorn did not have. Even if the strong clubs obeyed the Couter Law, there were additional benefits they could offer. Trips away, guarantees of employment, valuable trophies. So Hawthorn relied on advertising for players and picking up some of those dropped by other clubs⁶⁰. It would be some time before the Glenferrie oval club could challenge the bigger teams.

To help their cash strapped club Hawthorn players declared they were willing to play the last three rounds of the season for no pay as the club worked to financial stability⁵⁸

And Hawthorn picked up some wins at the end of the season. They beat Essendon in Round 16 then, in odd game at Geelong in Round 17, less than 2,000 Cats supporters came to see the home club. It was the worst crowd at Corio since the War years. The home team were listless, and did not trouble Hawthorn. They got the four points for the first time ever in Geelong but the excursion to Corio cost the club £40 in fairs, meals, equipment costs and more.⁶² Geelong supporters obviously not happy with the results of this season seemed to have given up on their team.

Round 18 could change the order of the final four and only an unlikely thrashing of Collingwood could elevate St Kilda from fifth to fourth but Collingwood had a comfortable win and the home and away season petered out. Hawthorn did manage to beat Fitzroy finishing the season the season with three wins in a row, the first time they had managed that since joining the VFL. Although the players had chosen to play for nothing, a special fund raising effort after the season allowed the club to pay that debt at the AGM and set the club up to

start 1936 in credit.⁹² Maybe things were looking up for Hawthorn.

St Kilda took the AlmostUs award for just missing out on the finals, fishing fifth, a game and percentage behind the Tigers, frustrating for the Saints but their first season under new coach Dan Minogue was their best since 1929, so hope for the future perhaps.. North had the wooden spoon, one win was better than none the previous year but still a tough era for Arden Street South had finished a game clear from their travelling companions Collingwood and Carlton were fourth. The top four had not changed since round 12.

On the Wednesday after the season finished the Umpires committee counted the Brownlow Medal votes and for the third time in five seasons Fitzroy's Haydn Bunton won the medal, the first triple Brownlow medallist. And he had been runner up by one vote in 1934. Unlike previous seasons the votes were shuffled so the public would not know which round votes were cast. Despite being the recipient of the umpires votes for the now high profile award, Bunton was critical of the voting system. He pointed out that since the inception of the Brownlow in 1924 all but two of the winners had been men playing around the centre. He wondered why forwards like Pratt or Coventry or some of the top full backs did not receive more votes. He proposed a representative from each club be delegated to assign votes, with a representative from the Umpires Board if necessary⁶⁶. Bunton might be surprised to hear that mid fielders are still topping the votes and every year people question whether Umpires should be awarding the Brownlow votes. Some things seemed destined to never change. Bunton was more than just a champion footballer, he was also an accomplished cricketer who had rubbed shoulders with some of the greats of the summer game. In 1927 he took part in the Country Cricket Week in Sydney with Stan McCabe in the Country team playing St George who had a fellow called Bradman in their team. On another occasion Bunton opened the batting for NSW Country against the visiting English side with fast bowler Harold Larwood in the attack,⁶⁵ possibly not yet employing the infamous bodyline tactics in that tour game.

The First semi final was between third place Carlton and Fourth placed Richmond. The previews for the game favoured the Blues but also noted the 15 year hoodoo that the Tigers had over the Blues. The last time Carlton beat Richmond in a final was in 1920. While the Blues had been regular finals guests their last premiership had been way back, in the war year 1915. The Tigers had played in seven of the last eight Grand Finals for two premierships so they knew their way around finals football. Both teams had won at home in their two games during the season but it was thought Carlton were the fresher, younger team and Richmond were carrying veterans of past successful campaigns. Just under 50,000 were at the MCG. Before the game started players were lined up and introduced to the Governor of Victoria, a ceremony that was accorded more honour and prestige than it would today, then the Toss of the coin won by Richmond Captain Coach Percy Bentley and the Tigers were kicking to the Punt Rd End. If the Blues were expecting a physical, clashing battering type of game from Richmond they were much mistaken. As explained in the Monday Age, the Tigers had a complete strategy in place as per the following points

1. Keith Shea, Carlton's Champion centreman to be hemmed in and hustled as much as possible
 2. Charlie Davey, Carlton's outstanding aerialist to be spoiled on every occasion
 3. Richmond's Horace Tubby Edmonds, to remain near the boundary line keeping the dashing Eric Huxtable near the boundary too. In some ways this was the opposite role for Tubby Edmonds from the 1929 Grand Final when he played for Collingwood and kicked 5 goals when Gordon Coventry acted as the decoy.
 4. Skinny Jack Titus to draw Carlton's Full Back Frank Gill forward as often as possible to allow resting rovers Harris and Martin to whip in behind to become the focus of attack
 5. Maurie Shehan to punch the ball away from Soapy Valence,
 6. Fred Heifner to carry out a special heavy bustling job in the ruck
 7. Gordon Strang to mark everything at half back. He took 21 marks for the game
- Every man to stick as close as possible to their man to offset Carlton's brilliant ground work. ⁶⁴

Whether Forward in the Age had been given a special briefing by a Tiger official, or maybe he picked up a copy of the plan in the change room after the game or perhaps this was just his analysis of how the game unfolded. In any event Carlton were left floundering for much of the game

A six goal advantage at half time was held through an even third quarter. The Blues did narrow the gap a little in the last stanza but it was a four goal win to the Tigers to send them through to the preliminary final and leave the Blues wondering yet again, when were they going to break the finals hoodoo against Richmond. I can give you a hint, it will be a long time and then it will be spectacular but that is for another episode far into the future.

The Second Semi Final was eagerly anticipated, South and Collingwood had been the best two teams all season. South Melbourne's training was hampered with the centre wicket area roped off in preparation for the approaching cricket season, this could have ended badly for one player who narrowly missed falling onto one of the iron stakes holding the rope when when he ran back for a mark. Pratt appeared late and there were concerns for the ankle he twisted at Tuesday night's training, the ankle originally injured on that northern trip with hard grounds and no boot studder, but he appeared on the field well after 5.00 o'clock to enthusiastic cheers from a large crowd of supporters. He trained well but did not attempt any high marks.⁶⁷ Meanwhile at Victoria Park another large crowd watched the Magpies go through their paces. Jock McHale provided this overview to the press "We have a well-balanced side of young players, who will be all out for Collingwood. Their form is as good as it has been at any stage this season." The Herald Friday night Preview had South favoured to win, the loss of Magpie ruckman Leo Murphy to a shoulder injury was a factor in that analysis. However South were without their brilliant wingman Herb Matthews.

53,800 people were at the MCG for the second Semi, almost the same number as saw the 1934 Semi Final between these two rivals. It was a chance to see two of the best full forwards matched with two of the leading full backs the youngster Pratt against Regan and veteran Gordon Coventry against Ron Hillis. The ground had looked in perfect condition on Friday but a severe hail storm had bucketed the city and soaked the oval, the Curtain Raiser had made things worse and it was treacherous underfoot in many places. Sawdust was spread across some of the muddiest patches in an attempt to improve grip.

Collingwood got away to a strong start in the first quarter in what the Age described as their best 12 minutes of the entire game, They had three goals on the board generating cheers from their supporters and anxiety for South Melbourne fans. But then the game changed, Collingwood began to fumble and South Melbourne players began to connect, allowing them to kick the next three goals and finish the quarter two points up. In the second quarter Pratt got two goals to bring up his century for the season, Collingwood were competitive but wasting shots, scoring behinds that should have been goals. At the long break South were a goal up. In the second half South Melbourne were able to take advantage of the drying ground, using their pace and high marking to break away from Collingwood. The momentum was heading their way and they went to the last break ahead 12.9 to Collingwood 9.13. The Magpies needed three goals to take the lead in the final quarter, they switched players around and made every effort to get back in the game but Full Back Ron Hillis seemed impassable. He turned back four separate attacks on his own. It became a comfortable four goal win for South⁶⁸. They were into their third Grand Final in a row while Collingwood had to take on their other main rivals from this era, Richmond in the preliminary final.

In the nine seasons since 1927 Richmond and Collingwood had played each other in three Grand Finals, a semi final and now a preliminary final. They were familiar foes.

But Richmond would not be able to train at their familiar home ground. Punt Road had been claimed by the cricketers who were top dressing the ground and they were had to train at Olympic Park.⁶⁹ The Football club were not happy tenants at Punt Rd and there was talk of a move to Olympic Park full time. In addition to a higher percentage of gate takings the Olympic Park offer included a share of broadcasting rights, bar, sweets and advertising. All taken for granted in the

modern era, all held by the Ground Management Association on most grounds ^{70,73}

The Tigers would take an unchanged team into the Preliminary Final, Captain Coach Percy Bentley told the Press "I feel very confident Richmond will win. The team has never shown better form at the end of any season than at present, and every man is at his top, Collingwood managed to beat us when we last met, thanks to a lucky goal and our bad kicking, but we intend to avenge that defeat to-morrow." At Victoria Park supporters were pleased to see ruckman Len Murphy on the field ready to take his place back in the team after missing the Semi final. A young Ron Todd paid the price for his inaccuracy in the Semi against South and was dropped for a member of a famous Collingwood family Alby Pannam, son of the legendary Charlie Pannam who played in 3 Collingwood premierships, their first in the VFA and the first two in the VFL as well as captaining the Magpies in 1905. Charlie Pannam had also played for Richmond for two seasons, their last in the VFA and first in the VFL as well as coaching the Tigers in 1912. Despite the potential for divided loyalties the Pannam's heart were with Collingwood. Alby Pannam's nephews were Lou and Ron Richards, providing a third generation of players to the club.

The Tigers emphatic win over Carlton made them favourites according to many supporters and in Horrie Clover's preview in the Herald.⁷¹ 46,000 were at the game. Not sure if the players followed the recommendation of Dr Jacob Jona, Hawthorn's president and a former South Australian player, to eat half a pound of under done steak and drink a glass of beer for lunch before a match.⁷⁴ I doubt any of our modern era players would follow that advice.

The game was played in fine conditions. Collingwood supporters were given reason to be anxious in the first quarter when ruckman Len Murphy, just returned to the team after injury was crunched again and his shoulder was no good, he was replaced by the 19th man, Charlie Dibbs who went to full back and Jack Regan moved to Centre half back. It may not have been the team the selectors had planned but it actually worked well for the Magpies. Regan was beating Jack Dyer at half forward and Dibbs was keeping Jack Titus under control, Choking off Richmond's supply of goals. Collingwood had the famous Machine Like efficiency on display and the Tigers were struggling to keep up. Although the Magpies were clearly playing the better football it was still a close game at half time. The Tigers were actually three points up but the second half belonged to Collingwood. Perhaps it was the weight of History. When the Magpies won their famous four premierships in a row between 1927 and 30 they beat the Tigers in three Grand Finals and one preliminary final. Now in 1935, another preliminary and the Magpies were on top again. Running out with a 5 goal win.

The Grand Final would be between South Melbourne and Collingwood. The two two teams of the year would be playing each other for an incredible seventh time this season, two home and away games, evenly split, three exhibition games when they travelled to Brisbane, Newcastle and Sydney, two wins to the Magpies and one for South and the Second Semi won by South. One season, six games already three wins each. Who would win the all important seventh decider in the Grand Final. South were favoured by many before one of the biggest dramas in the league's unfolded on the Thursday before the big game.

That afternoon Collingwood captain Harry Collier was walking along Hoddle Street. A passer by asked him how Collingwood would go on Saturday, Collier, perhaps thinking of Pratt's well documented ankle injury after that trip north without a boot studder, said "If Pratty wasn't in that bloody side, I thin we'd win."

Earlier that afternoon an extraordinary incident occurred. Just before 2.00pm Bob Pratt was walking to board a tram on High Street Prahran when he was hit by a truck carrying bricks. It was a glancing blow that sent him flying to the footpath with cuts and injuries to a thumb and ankle.

Placing things into perspective, by comparison to dramatic events happening elsewhere on the

planet, the South Melbourne Emerald Hill Record said “the initial attack on the inhabitants of Adowa by Mussolini’s invading army could not have occasioned Emperor Haile Selassie a greater shock than that received by South Melbourne Football club officials and players when they learned on Thursday afternoon through the press that Bob Pratt, the crack goal kicker had been injured in a collision with a motor truck.” Because an injury to a footy player in Melbourne is equivalent of a European power invading another country.

On Friday evening all was looking good according to South Melbourne officials, either blinded by deluded optimism or in an attempt to keep supporters and players spirits up. Club Secretary Dick Mullahey visited the injured man and said “Pratt has had a wonderful escape. He is not too bad and he will probably have a try out Saturday morning.’ Pratt was named in the team and everyone, except Bob Pratt, slept comfortably on Thursday and Friday night.

The driver of the truck was a South Melbourne supporter who must have felt terrible, he visited Pratt bringing him a packet of cigarettes. ⁷⁹ The optimism of South officials was not rewarded, Pratt listened to the game on the radio, smoking the cigarettes and maybe wondering how he might have played if he was fit.

Obviously such an incident, just before a Grand Final, generated all sorts of rumours and conspiracy theories. Years later Pratt himself suggested that the infamous gangster Squizy Taylor was behind the scheme to take him out of the Grand Final. The problem with that theory was Squizy had been killed in a shoot out in 1927, so unlikely to be involved.

While South were considered favourites by many, Collingwood secretary Bob Rush was confident Collingwood would win, but he expressed it in such a way that it was almost a compliment to the Swans saying “South Melbourne will have been the best team that ever missed a premiership.”⁸⁰

Jock McHale would once again be coaching Collingwood in his 13th Grand Final but he had a new captain with Harry Collier, four premierships from five Grand Finals taking over from the retired Syd Coventry had more than enough experience in these games

Jack Bisset would be leading South for the third Grand Final in a row as captain coach.

And they would be joined by the very experienced Umpire Robert Scott for an extraordinary seventh Grand Final which, at this time left him second only to Jack Elder’s 10. He had not umpired in any of the finals this season but was still chosen by the Umpire Committee for the biggest game of the season.

54 thousand were at the game, the smallest crowd since 1930

The curtain raiser saw Melbourne win another Reserve premiership, beating Geelong by four goals. It was the Fifth reserves premiership in a row for Melbourne, and their seniors had won 8 games this season. Was something developing at that club?

South won the toss and the game began with some hard clashes, the Sporting Globe called it a gruelling initiation replete with hard knocks, doubt and otherwise, and all were on tip toes not knowing when the next outbreak would occur.

The Swans scored the first two goals before Alby Pannam’s free kick on an acute angle on the boundary line when through the middle. A quick answer back from South with a long kick by Frank Davies got South out to a 15 point lead. But it could have been more. The bell for the first break saw South 3.6 24 to Collingwood 1.3 9. Would South regret that early inaccuracy.

Collingwood had looked like they were coming back into the game late in the first quarter but South were the team doing the attacking at the start of the second stanza, yet not converting their efforts to goals. As the game progressed so did the rough play, Collingwood were capitalising, getting goals on the board and taking the lead when, there was what some described, as five hectic minutes of play.

Players were knocked over, fists flew. The game was halted while the two boundary umpires ran to three players who had been throwing punches at each other after a Collingwood player had been tossed over the back of a South man. Collingwood seemed to be at home while the playing was hard, while South seemed more rattled when they tried to play the man and not the ball.

The Magpies went in to the long break with a 10 point lead and perhaps the momentum. A young Phones Kyne still a teenager but playing his second season had been one of their best players.

At the start of the third quarter it looked like Collingwood would continue their run, with wingman Leo Morgan weaving through a pack and sending a long kick into veteran Gordon Coventry. Like so many times through his career it was mark and goal.

South were not out of the game thought goals to Dinny Kelleher and Roy Moore reduced the gap to four points and the Swans supporters were in full voice encouraging their team on. Bob Pratt must have been working through that pack of cigarettes as he listened on the radio.

During the third quarter South Melbourne Captain Coach Jack Bisset and Collingwood's Albert Collier had a violent collision, giving Bisset the most severe knock of his career. Players rushed to the scene and there was more pushing and shoving before the umpires could settle things down. But Bisset was out, taken from the ground and sent to hospital where x rays would reveal a fractured skull. South were now without Pratt and their captain coach, Brighton Diggins took over the leadership role.

As the players rested for the last time for the season, Collingwood led 8.10 to South 6.10.

The players returned to their positions for the start of the last quarter, many were bruised and battered from what had been a brutal game, even by the standards of the time.

South seemed to be making the effort required to regain the lead but their accuracy was hurting them. What hurt even more was the Magpie captain, Harry Collier stamping his authority on the game, in what was seen by many as a pivotal moment. 40 yards out from goal, with a free kick, and the eyes of all 54 thousand spectators on him, he took a few steps, kicked and saw the goal umpire put up two fingers for the goal. The lead was now 19 points. But the game was not yet done.

In fact a few minutes later Swans veteran Terry Brain passed the footy to 19th man Roy McEachen, on the ground for Bisset. It was only his 14th game but he held his cool and scored the much needed goal.

It became a scramble of a game. South were having shots but only scoring behinds. Collingwood's veteran Charlie Dibbs was knocked out in another clash and carried off the ground. Replacing him was Collingwood's 19th man, Keith Stackpole, father of Australian Test cricketer of the 1960's and 70s, also named Keith Stackpole. Having only come in half way through the last quarter Stackpole had fresh legs, and no bruises, and scored a valuable goal for the Magpies, almost the sealer. The ball went back down to South Melbourne's forward line but they were not able to convert and another forward push for Collingwood saw Alby Pannam, another of new generation Magpies, kick the goal that absolutely put the game beyond challenge.

The bell finally rang to finish the fight, I mean the game, Collingwood 11.12 78 to a gallant but

23 scoring shots each but a 20 point win to the Magpies for their 10th VFL premiership and their 11th overall. It was 39th anniversary of the famous 1896 VFA premiership match, won by Collingwood against South Melbourne, the year before the break away VFL formed.

The Collingwood change rooms were the usual chaotic joyful affairs with congratulatory speeches from the VFL president, South Melbourne's Archie Crofts and club officials. But backman Charlie Dibbs had no idea what was going on. Carried off half way through the last quarter stretched out on a table, ignoring the celebrations. He was the last to leave the rooms, concussed and groggy, taken home in taxi by his wife. He was incapacitated for a month afterwards and family members say he was "never the same". He never played for Collingwood again, a career of 216 games ended in a premiership he could not remember. Some in the family blamed the concussion for the illness which ended his life in 1960. Given what we have learnt about concussion in recent years there may be something to those suspicions⁸². Jack Bisset was admitted to Prince Henry's hospital unable to recall any events after his collision with Albert Collier. On the Sunday morning after the game he asked the nurse, "Who won?"⁸³ The extent of his injury was such that he would spend a month in hospital, only receiving visitors after 3 weeks of rest. Even when he was released from hospital he had to refrain from work for 3 months. I wonder if Archie Crofts paid sick leave?

We should also note the retirement of Umpire Bob Scott, after 21 years of service, 156 games, 19 finals and seven grand finals Bob was hanging up the whistle for the very last time. ⁸⁶

Collingwood were ready to celebrate their win. And celebrate they did. The last premiership had been all of five years ago, an eternity as far as some Magpies were concerned. Jock McHale would be enjoying this more than the last Grand Final in 1930 when he was home in bed with the 'flu. Players and supporters made their way back to Victoria Park and as the evening wore on a Piano was taken out to the middle of the oval to accompany the celebrations. More celebrations on Sunday night saw Captain Harry Collier and half backman Harold Rumney plus their wives and Collier's twin brothers all squeezed into his car. Heading away from Victoria Park up Studly Park Road, Collier lost control of his car. Potential tragedy turned into comedy. The car ran into the front gate of Raheen, then home of Catholic Archbishop Daniel Mannix. Nobody hurt, Collier took off. But he left his bumper bar wedged in the gate, or fence depending on whose version of the story you read. Collier had to front up to Kew Police station to collect the bumper bar but, perhaps worse, had to go and apologise to Mannix, enduring the visit to the stern archbishop when, unlike many of his team mates, he wasn't even Catholic. But you get away with a lot when you're the captain of a premiership team. ⁸⁷

When the Grand Finalists announced their best and fairest winners for the season it was Albert Collier taking the Copeland trophy while Full Back Ron Hillis won South's award. ⁸⁸ Bob Pratt had kicked over a hundred goals in 1935 and 150 in 1934 and not won a best and fairest in either year. When he asked the committee why, he was told, "Your very spectacular but not very effective" and "You've won a lot, you cant have everything." Harsh criticism. Pratt might have been effective enough to win the premiership for the Swans if he was fit to play, but we will never know and that still might not have been enough to satisfy some on the South Committee. ⁷⁹

The start of November brings the Spring Racing Carnival to Melbourne and by coincidence was also the date for the regular conference of the Australian Football Council. A regular proposal to enact an order off rule was, once again, rejected. The South Australian delegates spoke on the existential threat to the game there from betting shops. There were 150 betting shops in Adelaide and every Saturday more than 100 young men attended each one, the impact on attendance on

football games was noticeable.⁹⁰ Fortunately gambling is no longer an issue for the modern game. The VFL tried to have the Boundary rule changed to revert to the throw in used up to 1924 but this was defeated by the other states.⁹¹

The remainder of the year saw some reform groups challenge committees and clubs, there was regular publicity about League players getting married and on a more serious note, the Richmond Football Club made it clear that unless the Cricket club provided a better offer, they would seek approval of the League and members to move to Olympic Park⁹³. Punt Road's future was in peril

The other topic of conversation was whether clubs should allow schoolboy games as curtain raisers rather than baseball games which had been the tradition. Reserves matches were played at the opposite ground to the seniors, many players worked Saturday morning so having reserves kick the dew off the ground on a Saturday was not an option. Collingwood had already moved to Schoolboy games. But clubs needed permission from local councils which were not always supportive.⁹⁴ Hawthorn City Council opposed the request saying schoolboy games on Glenferrie oval before League games would be encouraging undesirable forms of hero worship.⁹⁵

On a more positive note for the football and cricket following public was the announcement by the Melbourne Cricket club that £100,000 was to be spent on the new Southern stand increasing the ground capacity to 100,000. It would be a doubledecker, concrete stand built on the lines of American Football stands, with the big difference, that it would be curved rather than straight. The use of asbestos sheeting for the roof did not seem to cause any concern.⁹⁶

On that optimistic note, notwithstanding the use of asbestos, we will leave 1935, Collingwood were again premiers, Richmond was still in dispute over their home ground and clubs were appointing coaches looking for success in 1936, the 40th season of the VFL.

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