



PHOTO: RENNIE ELLIS PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE

# Through the lenses

A new book, *Our Great Game: The Photographic History of Australian Football*, captures the game at all levels, with black and white and colour photographs providing a broad perspective of how it has been played, watched and coached over its lifetime. Among more than 250 images are moments of unbridled joy and despair – realities of football every participant knows about. Here, three former players recall moments that will live forever, with them and with the rest of us. **PETER RYAN**

## Euphoria redefined

→ David McKay (right, holding the cup) was just 20. He had played in his 31st game, 25 of them coming in 1970. He was a premiership player, part of the greatest comeback in Grand Final history.

The feeling he had as he ran around the ground would not be surpassed in a career that ended with 263 games and four premierships with Carlton. "I just couldn't believe I was there and then to win

it after being so far down at half-time gave euphoric a whole new meaning," he said.

"There was no other place you'd want to be then, celebrating with the team you had just come back from the dead with."

McKay is holding the cup with Peter 'Percy' Jones. On the far left is Vin Waite, father of Carlton player Jarrad Waite, and Barry Mulcair is jogging behind. Supporters surrounded the players on their victory lap.

"The people were out slapping us on the back and diehard supporters were able to

celebrate directly with the players," McKay said. "It was a fantastic experience for them to be able to do that."

There were 121,696 people at the MCG to watch the Blues come from 44 points down at half-time to win by 10 points. McKay will never forget the wall of sound as he ran out on the ground, nor the atmosphere as the Blues mounted their comeback.

"I could certainly sense people in the crowd thought we had a chance and it lifted us," he said.



## A lost opportunity

→ "Just devastation," is how Collingwood defender Kevin Worthington (third from right) described the feeling moments after the Magpies lost the 1977 Grand Final replay.

Here, he is sitting beside Peter Moore, staring gun-barrel straight at the photographer shooting the moment.

"To go through the whole year and finish up with a draw and then come out and get beaten in the last game of the year, it was nothing short of devastation," he said.

Worthington played 95 games (including 12 finals) with Collingwood after joining the club from Western Australia in 1977. He played every match in his first VFL season, aged 24, part of the reason the Magpies rose from the bottom to be a heartbeat from a premiership. He played in three VFL Grand Finals – the two in 1977 and the 1979 loss to Carlton.

But he has never gotten over this moment. He doesn't think you ever get over Grand Final losses.

The room was quiet, those who have shared the experience the only people who could really understand what was going through each player's mind: "It's just one of everyone thinking about the lost opportunity. You get a small window of opportunity for premierships and we had it and lost it."



PHOTO: AFL COLLECTION

### A SELECTION OF OTHER IMAGES FROM THE BOOK



**BACK TO HIS ROOTS:** Former Collingwood and St Kilda player Damian Monkhorst at the Woori Yallock Football Club in country Victoria in 2001. MICHAEL DODGE



**CLASSICAL GRAB:** South Fremantle's John Gerovich marks over East Fremantle's Ray French at Subiaco Oval in 1956. MAURIE HAMMOND



**HOT GOSPELLER:** Alan Killigrew, North Melbourne's evangelical coach, in 1964. BOB BUCHANAN



**RED CENTRE:** The players of Kintore Football Club, about 530 kilometres west of Alice Springs, celebrate a Grand Final win in the Northern Territory in 2006. DAVID CALLOW



**DEMON DELIGHT:** Coach Norm Smith (right) and predecessor 'Checker' Hughes celebrate Melbourne's win over Collingwood in the 1964 Grand Final at the MCG. FAIRFAX PHOTOS



**CENTURION:** Hawthorn's Lance Franklin is mobbed by fans after kicking his 100th goal for the season against Carlton at Etihad Stadium in 2008. LACHLAN CUNNINGHAM



PHOTO: AFL COLLECTION

## The medallist wanted to be elsewhere

→ The 22-year-old Malcolm Blight is in the middle of the Adelaide Oval on SANFL Grand Final day in 1972, the first and only Magarey medallist from Woodville.

Yet all Blight was thinking was how good it would have been to be in the rooms getting ready to play. "I was so envious of the guys in the Grand Final," he said.

SANFL president Judge Don Brebner looked on as Blight worked his way through the formalities, feedback from the PA system screaming as he spoke. "Isn't it funny, the day that would have been a fairly decent celebration of what happened during the year, all my thoughts were somewhere else?" Blight said.

Six years later, while playing for North Melbourne, Blight became the first person to win both a Magarey and Brownlow Medal. By then he had two premierships with the Roos and was on his way to becoming a football icon, a Coleman medallist and a dual premiership coach with Adelaide.

He laughed when he saw the photo of the clean-cut lad at the microphone, wondering to himself: "Where have all the years gone?"



*Our Great Game: The Photographic History of Australian Football* (The Slattery Media Group) is available from [footybookclub.com](http://footybookclub.com) or bookstores nationally (\$99.95 RRP). It was launched at the MCG on Thursday by a panel of former stars including Kevin Bartlett.



**CONTENTED DOG:** With victory assured, Footscray captain-coach Ted Whitten retires to the bench to savour the final moments of the 1961 preliminary final. HERALD & WEEKLY TIMES



**MUDLARKS:** Mt Evelyn Rovers and Wandin Bulldogs battle the elements in the Yarra Valley District Football League match at Mt Evelyn in 2006. DAVID CALLOW



**DESOLATION:** Sydney Swan Tadhg Kennelly after the preliminary final loss to the Brisbane Lions at ANZ Stadium in 2003. ADAM PRETTY