

# Demons left to sweat

BEN MCKAY

MELBOURNE face an anxious wait to learn if they will qualify for the AFL finals after suffering a shock 16-point loss to Collingwood yesterday.

Needing a win to confirm the end of an 11-year wait for finals football, the Demons lost 14.15 (99) to 12.11 (83) to Nathan Buckley's Magpies. Brayden Maynard was a revelation in Collingwood's midfield, Taylor Adams put in a strong shift and Jamie Elliott kicked three goals.

Melbourne were lacklustre for most of the afternoon but came alive at the death with seven of the last nine goals.

With luckless forward Jesse Hogan sidelined again with a

## Finals hopes out of Melbourne's hands

hamstring issue, the Demons were unable to reel in the strong-starting Magpies and now lose control of their finals fate.

They must hope either Essendon or West Coast lose today – and St Kilda fail to win by 100 points – to play in September.

But on the evidence of the first three quarters, Simon Goodwin's side wouldn't last long.

Collingwood slammed on six first-quarter goals to one for their best opening term of the season.

Josh Daicos kicked his first AFL goal as the Magpies ran rings around their higher-ranked opponents.

Two mark of the season contenders from Jeremy Howe and Elliott before another goal showed the difference in vitality between the sides.

In a damning indictment of their effort, it took Melbourne 11 minutes to lay their first tackle.

Jeff Garlett started Melbourne's engine after the break, finishing a flowing move to announce their arrival in the match but their momen-

tum stalled with a string of behinds.

Elliott made the Demons pay with a stunning snap, maintaining Collingwood's control.

Their lead peaked at 42 points in the third term before four straight majors gave Melbourne a glimmer of hope.

Their late charge continued, with Cam Pedersen putting the Demons remarkably within eight points with 10 minutes remaining.

Will Hoskin-Elliott slammed the door shut with the final goal of the game after a madcap goal scramble.

### COLLINGWOOD V MELBOURNE

**MAGPIES** 6.5 9.6 12.10 14.15 **99**

**DEMONS** 1.3 4.8 9.10 12.11 **83**

#### BEST

**Collingwood:** T Adams J Elliott B Maynard B Grundy T Phillips W Hoskin-Elliott A Treloar.

**Melbourne:** C Oliver N Jones J Garlett C Salem J Lewis J Melksham

#### GOALS

**Collingwood:** J Elliott 3 M Cox 2 T Phillips 2 W Hoskin-Elliott 2 B Grundy J Daicos S Sidebottom T Adams T Broomhead.

**Melbourne:** J Melksham 3 A Neal-Bullen 2 C Petracca 2 J Garlett 2 C Pedersen J Watts M Hannan.

#### CROWD

51,223 at MCG.

## Kangaroos belt Lions in battle for spoon

CIARAN BAYNES

BRISBANE Lions have finished the season with the wooden spoon after losing yesterday to North Melbourne by 51 points at the Gabba.

The battle between the bottom two sides at the start of the final round was unsurprisingly lacking in quality but the Kangaroos' superior desire saw them run out 19.16 (130) to 11.13 (79) winners in front of a crowd of 15,416.

Ben Brown was the star, kicking seven goals for North Melbourne to move within one of Coleman Medal leader Josh Kennedy of West Coast.

The Kangaroos can now likely finish the campaign in 15th spot on the ladder.

The Lions will have the first pick in the AFL draft for the first time in 19 years, after selecting second after the past two seasons.

Despite their lowly position, Brisbane have received plaudits for their improved play this season.

But there will be little for Chris Fagan to take from this match, which was likely the worst of their campaign.

Their malaise was epitomised by a boundary throw-in where their smallest player Dayne Zorko was left to contest and the first 10 minutes of the third quarter when they mustered only 14 disposals.

The Kangaroos dominated clearances and territory early in the match but got little reward, scoring 1.8 against the Lions' five goals straight from just nine inside 50s.

### NTH MELBOURNE V BRISBANE

**KANGAROOS** 1.8 5.9 13.12 19.16 **130**

**LIONS** 5.0 5.5 8.9 11.13 **79**

#### BEST

**North Melbourne:** B Brown, S Higgins, T Dumont, L McDonald, S Gibson, R Clarke

**Brisbane:** D Rich, A Witherden, D Zorko, R Mathieson, C Beams

#### GOALS

**North Melbourne:** B Brown 7 L Thomas 3 S Higgins 2 B Cunningham J Anderson J Simpkin K Turner N Hrovat S Durdin T Goldstein.

**Brisbane Lions:** D Zorko 2 T Rockliff 2 A Witherden C Beams D Beams D Rich H McCluggage M Close R Mathieson.

#### CROWD

15,416 at the Gabba

## Defeat as Ilett exits

JOSH SPASARO

IT WAS a cruel way for retiring Thunder legend Cameron Ilett's NEAFL career to finish, but once again it was his team's inconsistency which let them down.

The Territory outfit played some brilliant football at times before being outclassed 19.9 (123) to 12.12 (84) against the Gold Coast in the elimination final at Metricon Stadium yesterday.

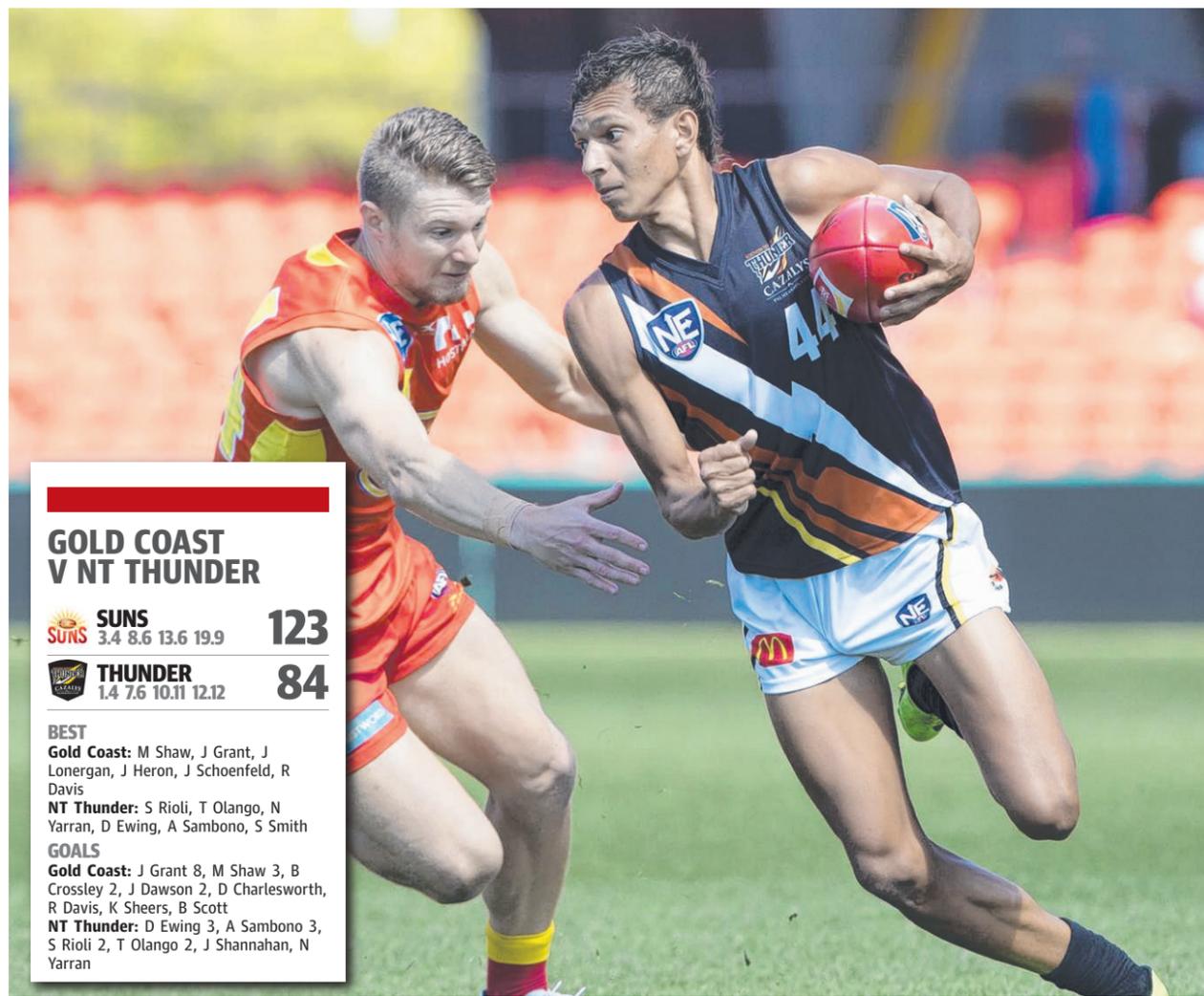
The Thunder produced some brilliant patches of play in the first half to see them trail by just a goal at the main break.

Adam Sambono kicked three goals for the afternoon, and his one in the eighth minute of the second term had Territory magic stamped all over it.

Nick Yarran showed brilliant footwork and vision to find the 2017 NEAFL Rising Star winner, who made no mistake from 45m out, to see the NT trail by 16 points.

A few minutes later, some excellent Yarran work off the ground saw Sambono snap for another major.

And when Yarran soccered through for a goal with 22 minutes gone in the second term, the NT took a one-point lead. But the Suns, led by Jar-



### GOLD COAST V NT THUNDER

**SUNS** 3.4 8.6 13.6 19.9 **123**

**THUNDER** 1.4 7.6 10.11 12.12 **84**

#### BEST

**Gold Coast:** M Shaw, J Grant, J Lonergan, J Heron, J Schoenfeld, R Davis

**NT Thunder:** S Rioli, T Olango, N Yarran, D Ewing, A Sambono, S Smith

#### GOALS

**Gold Coast:** J Grant 8, M Shaw 3, B Crossley 2, J Dawson 2, D Charlesworth, R Davis, K Sheers, B Scott

**NT Thunder:** D Ewing 3, A Sambono 3, S Rioli 2, T Olango 2, J Shannahan, N Yarran

Thunder forward Adam Sambono was a shining light in a disappointing loss against Gold Coast, with three goals. Picture: TJ YELDS - NEAFL

rad Grant (eight goals), took charge in the third term, kicking five goals to three.

The momentum continued with the hosts in the fourth, booting six goals to two.

It was a stunning finish from the Suns, who had not beaten the Thunder in their past 11 encounters.

But the Thunder dropping

off in the second half was not a huge surprise – inconsistency has plagued them all season.

"It was really disappointing – we played 15 to 20 minutes of really good footy," Thunder coach Andrew Hodges said.

"It's been a frustrating past month of footy for us. Jack Shannahan dislocated his shoulder and Richard Tam-

bling did his calf and we just couldn't come back."

The Thunder won the inside-50 count, but could not convert their chances, kicking 12 behinds.

"We didn't go deep enough with our inside-50 entries and we weren't clean enough with the ball when it mattered," Hodges said.

NT captain Shannon Rioli (two goals and 27 disposals) led by example, while Grant, Matt Shaw (three goals and 39 disposals), Josh Schoenfeld (30), Jesse Lonergan (38), Jacob Heron (26) led the way for the Gold Coast.

Hodges said Ilett "left a great legacy" for the younger players coming through.

## Saints still have a prayer

MOST likely St Kilda will farewell AFL great Nick Riewoldt when they face Richmond today but there is still a possibility they will go marching into the finals.

In a season of so many twists and turns, it seems only fitting that the Saints are some sort of chance to claim a play-off berth if they can beat the Tigers at the MCG.

St Kilda were 10th heading into round 23 and need to

beat the fourth-placed Tigers then hope Fremantle beat Essendon and Adelaide defeat West Coast. Adding to the intrigue, all three games are today, with the Bombers the early game and the Eagles the latest start.

"It's a bit of a strange situation. We've got to rely on other teams, but we've got to just concentrate on getting a result first," St Kilda midfielder Jack Sinclair said.

## Tributes for Morphett

LEGENDARY sports broadcaster Drew Morphett has died.

Morphett (pictured) passed away at his home on Friday night, aged 69.

It is believed he was watching the Hawks and Bulldogs AFL match. He was not thought to be unwell.

Long-time friend and colleague Robert Walls led the tributes yesterday morning,

saying he was "very saddened" by the news. "Like everybody I'm shocked and stunned and saddened because it was only a week ago that I was at a Carlton lunch and Drew was there," Walls said.

"He looked in good spirits." He said Morphett "always had a smile on his face", as one of the most universally loved broadcasters in Australia.

## Eagles counting on upset

WEST Coast fans are being forced to do the unthinkable this weekend – barrack for arch-rivals Fremantle.

Fremantle's game against Essendon at Etihad Stadium today could play a significant role in West Coast's finals hopes. The Eagles entered the final round in ninth spot, 1.8 per cent adrift of the Bombers.

If the out-of-form Dockers manage to beat Essendon, then West Coast will qualify

for the finals with a win over Adelaide in Perth today.

The Eagles can leapfrog Melbourne if they can beat Adelaide by something in the vicinity of 20-25 points.

Beating the ladder-leading Crows is a massive challenge in itself, let alone needing to beat them by more than 20 points.

If the Dockers beat Essendon, then even a one-point win against Adelaide would get the Eagles into the top eight.