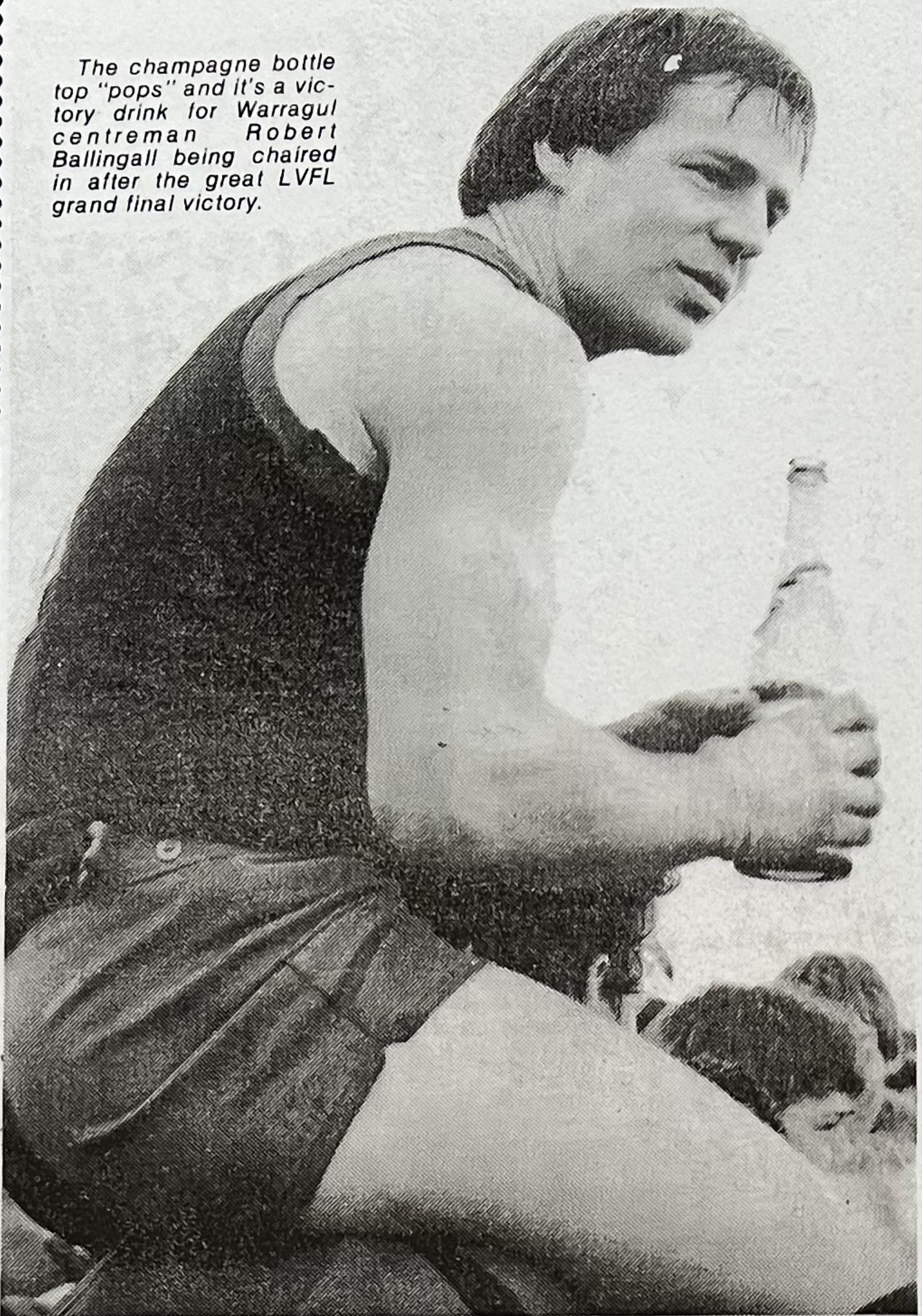


Record breaking L.V.F.L. fin

The champagne bottle top "pops" and it's a victory drink for Warragul centreman Robert Ballingall being chaired in after the great LVFL grand final victory.



Good old red and black!

Saturday was the day for red and black colors.

Essendon and Warragul wear red and black and so do Bena, who won their first premierships for 53 years beating Dalyston in the Bass Valley-Wonthaggi grand final.

Bena's previous win was over Loch at Poowong in 1931 — and the club also

won a double like Warragul on Saturday.

Collingwood fans broken hearted again, will be pleased to know that Glengarry carried the black and white colors to a four points win over Gormanale in the North Gippsland grand final.

Glengarry booted 10 goals straight in the first half to 3.2 and won 12.4 to 11.6! It was almost Gleniwobbles!

erected a huge amount of scaffolding to enable Graeme McGown, Tony Osler and special guest Kelvin Templeton to broadcast the grand final — 3UL's first for some eight years.

The huge blue banner let the crowd know 3UL was back — a fighting comeback as far as they were concerned last week!

Hawthorn liaison officer Frank Davis was there to select the 3UL best afield — Warragul defender Peter Quirk.

Another large assemblage attended the official luncheon sponsored by Winfield.

Highlight was the presentation of this year's Latrobe Valley VCFL Districts media award by District Director Mr Jack Huxtable.

Well deserved recipient was Graeme Eddy, who on Saturday broadcast his 599th LVFL match over 3TR during 23 years at the microphone or on TV-8.

Graeme is a former Sale reserves player who found himself broadcasting football instead of playing it when Gary Ord left 3TR in 1961. Accolades bestowed on him are fully deserved.

As last year's District winner, we hope Graeme goes on and gives us our second successive Victorian Country Football League media award success — the first being presented to yours truly at this year's VCFL annual meeting in February.

Women with weight problems watched enviously as fit young ladies from Moe and later Sale went through dancing routines between matches.

It was one of the arena events designed to involve everyone. With fit young men in the three matches winning admiration from the fairer sex, it was also nice for the bird watchers in the crowd to be part of the action as well!

The presentation of best and fairest awards prepared everyone for the culmination match of the season.

Graeme Rankin and Gary House received their medals and went off on a lap of honor leaving Peter Hall to do his with teammates.

Then came the sensations. Hoeben and Northe are in!

Ten minutes after the start Traralgon's world fell in. Peter Bermingham and Neil Grigg collided head-on. It was a sickening sight.

Bermingham was out cold with a broken jaw — Grigg ran off holding his arm. Both interchange players were on — and the match had hardly started.

It seemed the last straw for Traralgon who missed several scoring chances just when a couple of goals could have lifted morale.

At this stage, 20 minutes after the start, I heard a Traralgon supporter whisper to a friend "I think we have had it."

The prestigious Stan Aitken Memorial medal for best afield was inaugurated in 1980 to respect the memory of

the leagues most popular president.

Winners have been Tim Nuttall (Traralgon) 1980, Bruce Cowell (Bairnsdale) 1981, Ian Salmon (Leongatha) 1982 and Russell Northe (Traralgon) 1983.

To that distinguished list is now added the name of Warragul's lion hearted follower John McNicholas.

This was the final presentation after all 40 players had received medallions and the premiers Warragul the LVFL premiers cup to take home and fill with the nectar of victory at Logan Park Reception Centre.

The 3UL helicopter which had flown the cup to the match, per two young ladies from the Moe Fitness Centre, took off again to direct traffic home.

It also pointed out where the booze buses were located — what a service!

Traralgon went home to their clubrooms to reflect on the day everything went wrong.

It was the heaviest grand final defeat (83 points) in club history. It was also the clubs 12th time as runner up in 21 grand finals since 1954.

It was announced that Peter Hall was that evening re-appointed coach for a 10th year next season when he will get his 200th game with the club.

A decade as a football coach in a senior club must be a record. Peter will not coach after next season — he will play out time as a player with Traralgon from 1986.

Traralgon's presentation night is Friday, October 5.

Warragul's wind up night is on Thursday, October 4 — which is handy for LVFL officials attending both functions.

The Gulls are celebrating their first double premiership since 1974 when the seniors beat Moe and the reserves tossed Traralgon.

Warragul has now won three LVFL premierships — two coached by Graeme Gahan and other in 1976 by inter league coach Ken Robinson. Former player Alan Singline coached their reserves premier team.

The club also won the LVJFL under 16 premiership and were under 14 runners up. The thirds, after a poor start, finished in great style to just miss the four.

It has certainly been the year of the Gull. Congratulations are due to president Mr Brian Fitzpatrick and secretary Mr Chris Woodhouse — both 'newchums' in the club taking over from long serving president and secretary Messrs Jim Sinnett and Doug Hemming — who were both there on Saturday.

There are good grounds for claiming that this year's team is the best ever fielded by the Warragul Football Club.

Warragul's last defeat was in a sensational game in the wet at Leongatha in round 17 when they lost 3.9 to 5.12 after leading for three quarters.

Since then, Warragul beat Moe 14.7 to 10.5, TTU 26.15 to 5.6, Maffra 22.10 to 11.5, Bairnsdale 14.18 to 10.6, YYN 29.19 to 12.9.

Missing a double chance on percentage, Warragul then beat Morwell 16.16 to 8.12, Leongatha 18.16 to 12.8 and finally Traralgon 19.11 to 5.12 to win the 1984 premiership.

That's eight wins in succession and the closest margin was 26 points!

Several keen Gull supporters are planning holidays on the "4/1 the double" odds accepted last week.

Shane Nolan and Vas Vasilow were very competent field umpires in the senior grand finals.

Bill Traill's panel from Latrobe Valley also played their part in an unforgettable series.

The Gahan family hopes to complete a premierships quadrangle next Saturday when Michael plays for Richmond in the VFL under 19 grand final at the MCG.

Dad Graeme has already coached Warragul seniors to an LVFL premiership.

Brother Darren was in Warragul's reserve premiership team and last month Jonathan was in the Gull fourths LVJFL U.16 premiership side.

Michael will do his best to make it four out of four for Warragul's premier football family.

The LVFL Media Award panel has to name the coach of the year before the finals start.

They have yet to select a premiership coach.

Choice this year was Neville Stone bowled out with Leongatha in the preliminary final.

There are quite a few qualifications required to win the award and in the panels opinion the Parrot leader was a top choice. But Graeme Gahan (Warragul) — like Allan Lowe (Morwell) last year when Trevor Fletcher (Bairnsdale) was the choice — won the award that really counts in football.

In a team now rated as Warragul's all-time best only Steve Hodge (full back) and Trevor Smith (wing) won a category award and Hodge played the finals at centre half forward.

The other category winners in the Media Award were:

Wayne Royal (Bairnsdale) best back pocket, Colin Boyd (Leongatha) half back flank, David McMahon (Bairnsdale) centre half back, Michael Atkin (Bairnsdale) centre, Tony Lane (Traralgon) half forward flank, Allan Lowe

Latrobe Valley's best ever promoted finals series netted an all time record \$33,743.

All gates were records capped by Saturday's \$12,500 which beat last years previous best by \$4,000.

Joe Hutchison, described as the best secretary in Victorian country football, inaugurated the finals tickets idea.

The 12 page brochure he gave each match official to study to ensure top efficiency was just one example of the secretary's aim for perfection.

Moe City Council deserves full marks to its assistance to the LVFL.

Staging finals is a big thing for a country city — and Moe Council knows it.

Poor Traralgon — with the best facilities in the league outside the fence, are still staring at the mud pond that cost them staging of the first semi final.

Apparently the oval needs to be raised 13 centimetres to become suitable for top football. That's a lot of work and a lot of expense.

But in a city boasting top class facilities for other sports it's a shame the football ground has to lag behind. Particularly for a club regarded as the best managed in Victorian country football.

LVFL grand final week started on Monday night with the counting of best and fairest votes in all three grades in the massive Kernot Hall at Morwell.

The pressure was already on with Joe Hutchison working flat out as usual to cover a couple of administrative hassles.

Warragul struck first blood when the young Trafalgar star Graeme Rankin won the Bruce Wilkinson Award.

Graeme probably does not know that the donor was a league driving force in the 1960's who combined the duties of league president with District Councillor (now District Director) with twice the area as is now the case in the Latrobe Valley VCFL Districts.

Gary House gave Traralgon-Tyers United its first major success by win-

ning the Rex Hartley award after being runner up last year.

The Trood Award and Rodda Medal resulted in a second win for Traralgon captain-coach Peter Hall (the first in 1977) and he was also a runner up last year.

League sponsors handed out large cheques for winners of the Winfield and other awards — including goal kicking.

The night was not without its drama.

League President Mr Harry Shoesmith, in his final address, thanked everyone most lavishly particularly TV-8 and 3TR with only a scant reference to 3UL which also broadcast the count.

This led to a reference in Valley Sport, which incorporates the league booklet "The Follower" which did not exactly endear the league president to the author at Saturdays official luncheon.

Which makes a point — no quarter is given on the ground in Latrobe Valley football — that also applies to the media giving countless hours and space to match promotion.

Promoting one at the expense of another is not exactly good public relations and we are happy to report that Mr Shoesmith did a splendid job mentioning *everyone* in his speech at the luncheon on Saturday.

There were also moments of drama with both clubs working on injured players during the week.

Alan Ross was the worry at Warragul and at Traralgon non-stop treatment was administered to Russell Northe, Ricky Hoeben and Carl Vesty — aftermaths of the match against Leongatha in the tough second semi final.

Ross was named in Warragul's team (he needed treatment before and during the match) but the other three were not selected in Traralgon's team — not to the public anyway.

As it turned out, Hoeben took his place in the team and Northe was interchange. So much for all that air time given to

promoting the match, talking about players that were out when all the time they were in!

The weeks rain, which caused much flooding in Gippsland, did not cause any real problem to the Moe oval playing surface.

This was the first thing people looked at when they started arriving at 7.30 pm.

At Traralgon, 170 supporters were lining up for the annual grand final breakfast in the club social rooms and were entertained by the talented Trevor Pickering until 11 am when special buses took them all to Moe.

At nearby TV-8 (also in Traralgon) Graeme Eddy compered a one hour program at another breakfast attended by special guests.

Opposing coaches Graeme Gahan and Peter Hall answered questions fluently like 'Yes', 'Maybe', 'Think so' and 'Could'.

The scores came in as the breakfast party broke up. Sale thirds were 5.2 to Morwell 0.6 at quarter time. It was time to get to Moe!

The carnival atmosphere expected was not there because of overcast weather. But those trade leased marquees were packed enabling people to shelter from the odd showers and cool south-westerly.

It was really a typical LVFL grand final day — a cross wind, some showers, some sunshine and everyone tensed up for the big match.

Sale had bolted in with the thirds premiership and Warragul were holding off Leongatha in the reserves.

If 3UL felt a little unwanted on Monday night, there is no doubt everyone knew the station was there on Saturday.

The inimitable Tony Osler was the match comper and gave the necessary atmosphere in typical Tony style.

Fresh from a successful stint at West Gippsland finals, Tony was perfection plus even thanking little children for staying off the ground.

Up in front of the old Moe clubrooms 3UL had

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