#### West Gippsland GRAND FINALS

# VARRAGUL'S GRAND FINAL

rul has won the WGLFL Western Division thip, the club's first senior premiership atoning for its grand final loss last

messly windy conditions interspersed with rain prevailed over a gallant Garfield by 19 points 5-6 - at Nar Nar Goon.

I's most recent premiership was in 1994, but was its fourth grand final loss since then.

al squandered hard won opportunities in the Her that could have broken apart the game but epreliminary final against ROC a week earlier hat extra premiership quality in the last term to ecarious position at three-quarter time into a in the conditions that prevailed.

ills gave resounding "yes" answers to the two raised by its two losses to Garfield, its only ats for the season - could they match the Stars' ferociousness at ground level and could they ressure for four quarters to curtail the Stars' nning?

ul's pressure was intense from the start. did Garfield players have the chance to get a

dball or kick to a running team mate. were forced into hurried disposals and kicks e body, a problem compounded by the condi-

final scores indicate, it was a tough day for ford both defences minimised danger by forcing the "dead" eastern flanks and wing at every

er, the big difference between the sides was in

all had a strong focal point in full forward Paul who finished with four goals, while Garfield Mal McKenna found life difficult, spending able time further up the ground and having taks on the interchange bench.

unningham looked for a time during the second hat he might cause Warragul some problems in brward post, but the Gulls' upfield pressure and me of captain-coach Ashley Green at centrecut off most scoring opportunities.

Warragul taking advantage of kicking to be the southern end of the ground in the first quarter, began with a couple of great match-ups on the Garfield's Danny O'Brien and Warragul's Leigh m one, pacy youngsters Brad Nott (Warragul)

Pumphrey on the other. took the points in the first quarter and O'Brien mg into a number of roles during the game but and skills suffered in the conditions.

got the first goal when Whelan converted mark, aided by clever blocking of the runs of defenders by Simon Byrne.

ufield struck back; a hurried kick forward land-Shaun Pickering wisely playing in front of his

cams were very hard at the ball with Warragul slight edge in general play through players Ryan Flack, Baldry, Robert and Danny Murphy Edney, and a pass from Flack to Byrne resulted ulls' second goal.

gul led 2-2 to 1-1 at quarter time.

d played its best football for the match in about

nute period of the second term.

troduction of young thirds player Tom Marsh ruck began to give Garfield some use of the lough its first goal for the quarter came from a direct move from a kick in which ended with and goal to Joe Allen.

and ruckman Stephen Pitt, dropping back into thwarted a number of Garfield moves and the teadied when the lively Tim Brady, and then converted from good marks.

gul's pressure prevented Garfield from playing usual poise and surety, and decision making

to suffer. Itime, Warragul's 4-3 to 2-5 lead had been hard but deserved.

Carfield centreman Lincoln Withers had worked over the ground for Garfield but Warragul's inekling and smothering had curtailed his usual te in setting up play for his team.

ree-quarter time, the Warragul camp may have ring its failure to capitalize on chance after

ted just 1-8 for the quarter while Garfield's rare brward produced three straight goals - O'Brien g one through against the run of play, Mal ma getting his only goal for the day from a good n a lead and kick from almost 50 metres and Pickering, who read much better than the Waresence a centering kick by Withers to the front of

iggest culprit in front of goals for Warragul was who played a terrific quarter but managed just I from a host of shots - hardly a criminal offence lowling cross wind but leaving his team just six pat the last break with the tent to the te

CONCORD ORTS RANCE

Warragul's captain-coach Ashley Green and president, Bob Baldry, were delighted to raise the premiership cup to the cheers of the players and supporters who've been waiting almost 20 years for a Gulls' flag.

The last quarter could not have started better for Warragul.

Withers grabbed the ball in the centre and tried to use his strength to give his side early impetus, but the gang tackling Warragul won a free kick from him and, when the ball was knocked away, the resulting 50-metre penalty put Edney 40 metres out and he kicked superbly.

Edney had been one of Warragul's hard players in and around the packs all day and certainly enhanced his standing as a player throughout the final series.

Garfield's frustration at the Gulls'constant and concentrated pressure started to show and it lost Gavin Upton for 15 minutes after he was sent off - and appeared to have been reported.

Warragul's Xavier Gargan left the ground on a stretcher after colliding with Upton and severely injurying a hamstring.

When Robert Murphy intercepted a Garfield passed and found Whelan, who finally got on target, the match had been sealed.

It was a fitting way for both these players to end the match; they'd been great contributors all day with Murphy chosen by the umpires to be the recipient of the best on the ground medal.

Warragul executed its team plan well under the condi-

Green led superbly and the Warragul team looks much more solid with him in a key defence position; Baldry, Edney, Brady, Peter McKenna, and the Murphys were among the smaller players that dispelled doubts about Warragul's ability to apply pressure, and "old heads" Flack, Justin Cant and Gary Olsson provided good leadership and strong contests.

Stephen Pitt, although a bit short for a ruckman, was competitive in that role all day - and in all of Warragul's finals in the absence of the injured Paul Wallin - and gave timely support to the defenders.

For Garfield, rover Andy Soumilas was superb but didn't have quite enough helpers.

Withers certainly gave his all but was prevented from providing his accustomed impact, Shaun and Justin Pickering, Ben and Nick Marsh and Pumphrey never easily conceded any ground and were instrumental in many of Garfield's forward moves.

But perhaps the team's, and the club's, most positive point on a disappointing day was the performance of youngster Tom Marsh, who was elevated from the thirds only just before the finals and has shown potential to develop into a top line player with his ruck work and strong marking around the ground

## The scorecard

Warragul 2-2, 4-3, 5-11, 7-13, 55 Garfield 1-1, 2-5, 5-5, 5-6, 36

Best - Warragul: Robert Murphy, Stephen Pitt, Ashley Green, Justin Cant, Nic Edney, Ryan Flack. Garfield: Andy Soumilas, Ben Marsh, Nick Marsh, Jai

Pumphrey, Lincoln Withers. Goals - Warragul: P. Whelan 4, N. Edney, S. Byrne,

T.Brady.

Garfield: S.Pickering 2, M.McKenna, D.O'Brien, Joe

Best on ground medal: Robert Murphy (Warragul). Captain/coaches: Ashley Green (Warragul), Ben Soumilas (Garfield).

Umpires: D. Anderson, I. Ballantyne, S. Walker (field); J.Quinn, J.Stratton (boundary); M.Argoon, D.Barnes (goal).

### Both line-ups

Warragul

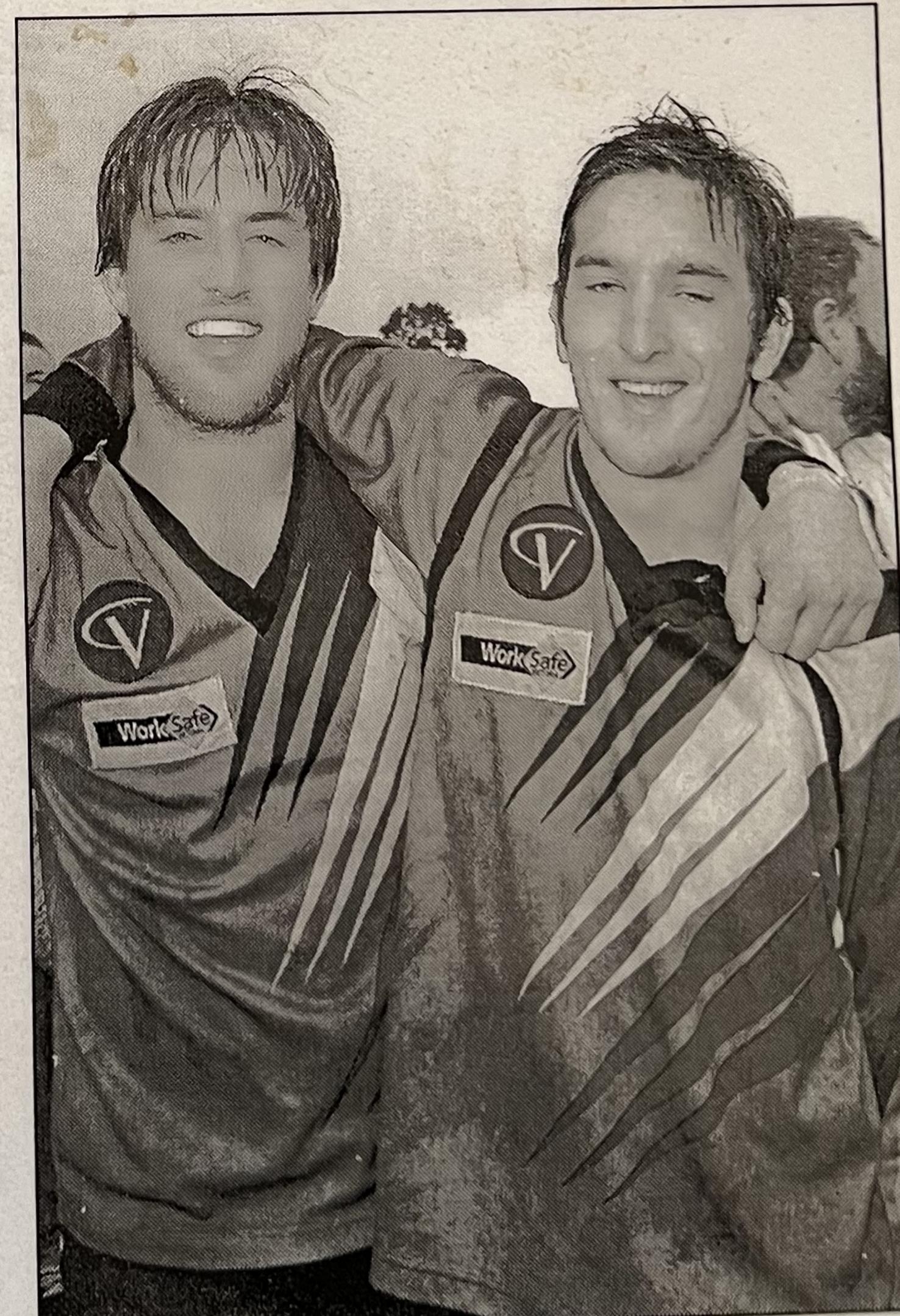
Backs: P.McKenna, G.Aitken, N.Humphrey. H-backs: J.Cant, Ashley Green, B.Nott. Centres: R. Murphy, D. Barr, L. Baldry. H-forwards: N.Edney, G.Olsson, G.Marshall. Forwards: S.Byrne, P.Whelan, T.Brady. Ruck/rovers: S.Pitt, D.Murphy, R.Flack. Interchange: B:Sheehan, T.Keily, X.Gargan.

Garfield

Backs: J. Hower, B. McFarlane, R. McKenna. H-backs: J.Pickering, B.Soumilas, N.Marsh. Centres: J.Pumphrey, L. Withers, D.O'Brien. H-forwards: D.O'Hara, Joe Allen, Jack Allen. Forwards: G.Upton, M.McKenna, S.Pickering. Ruck/rovers: J.Nibbs, A.Soumilas, B.Marsh. Interchange: H.Lacunes, T.Marsh, M.Cunningham.

WGLFL FOOTBALL AND NETBALL GRAND FINAL PHOTOS BY

#### TOM ELTON and FRED REEVES



Brothers in airms. Robert (left) and Danny Murphy were the first to congratulate each other after Sunday's win. Shortly after, Robert was named winner of the medal for best player in the match.