

Gulls for grand final



By PETER FLAHERTY

FORMER South Melbourne and Latrobe Valley footballer Trevor Somerville learnt his biggest football lesson while playing for Traralgon in 1961.

Trevor was 16 and was playing his first year of senior football in the LVFL. Playing in the back pocket he ran through a pack with his head down as he attempted to pick up the ball. The next thing he knew, two trainers were helping him off the ground. The broken nose soon healed and the two black eyes slowly faded but the lesson was one Trevor never forgot.

Being able to protect yourself properly was almost a pre-requisite for footballers in the LVFL in Trevor's day. Although play was slower, it was tougher and heavy knocks were part of the game.

It was well that Trevor did learn how to protect himself. In a playing career which spanned almost 20 years, the ruckman and key position player came face to face with some of the LVFL's most feared competitors, including Moe's Alan Steele and Traralgon's Charlie Healy.

During his career Trevor played with four Latrobe Valley clubs, coached two to finals and one (Sale) to a premiership. With those four clubs — Traralgon, Maffra, Sale and Yallourn — Trevor played almost

FORMER Latrobe Valley footballer Trevor Somerville gets his kick away in a match between South Melbourne and St Kilda during the mid 60's. Former Sale player Alan Morrow does the tackling as St Kilda team mates Ross Smith and Eric Guy (23) run in. Watching the action is South Melbourne and former Traralgon player Paul Harrison.

The Somerville survival lesson

200 senior games and represented the Latrobe Valley in inter-league matches on several occasions.

The heavy knocks Trevor received in the LVFL was the sort of baptism which helped the young Traralgon player adjust to life in the VFL after being signed by South Melbourne at the start of the 1963 season. For Trevor's first opponent was Carlton's legendary giant ruckman John Nicholls.

Trevor played for the Swans until 1967 and in that time even played against his brother John who played for Essendon. During that time Trevor learnt the hard way that being able to protect yourself also meant being able to hand out some rough stuff as well.

"We were playing against Hawthorn and my opponent was 'Delicate Des' Dickson," Trevor recalled. "Everytime I went for the ball he'd give me a whack behind the ear. At the break, the South coach Noel McMahon told me that if he did it again to let him have one. Later in the match... bang... he hits me so I turned around and gave him one back. He didn't come near me for the rest of the game".

Such incidents helped Trevor develop his own football philosophy when it came to rugged play. The philosophy was simple — give more back than you receive. "If you play football the way it should be played then there should be no fighting," Trevor said. "My message to young footballers is that there are no bonuses for fighting but if a guy is going to have a go give him back a little bit more with hip and shoulder, no fists".

It was a philosophy which Trevor had plenty of time to bring into

practice. After quitting VFL football at the age of 22, Trevor moved to Tasmania to take on a job as assistant coach for North Launceston for the 1967 season. The following year he was made coach and he took the side to third in the Northern Tasmanian Football Association. The following year, Trevor moved back to the Latrobe Valley to coach Maffra seconds and in 1970 became captain coach of the senior team.

Maffra should have won the premiership that year, according to Trevor, but was let down by two or three "undisciplined" players. Moe beat Maffra by nine points in the preliminary final.

Trevor went to Sale as captain coach in 1971 and was rewarded with a premiership. Back to back premierships looked likely when Sale finished on top of the ladder at the end of the 1972 season but two losses in a row in the finals saw them finish third.

Trevor admits that being replaced by Jim Hart as Sale's coach in 1973 was one of the major disappointments of his career but he still played out the season to be a member of Sale's premiership team.

But in 1974, he was named captain coach of Yarram in the Alberton Football League and took the club into the grand final. The club lost but Trevor received some consolation by winning the AFL best and fairest.

Trevor joined his fourth Latrobe Valley club in 1975 when he was cleared to Yallourn. He stayed there for two years before joining Rosedale in the North Gippsland Football League, and just missed

Will teach Parrots how to perform

By PAUL O'BRIEN

LAST week Warragul gave Morwell a football lesson and they look set to repeat the dose this week against Leongatha in the Latrobe Valley Football League preliminary final at Moe.

It is very doubtful that Leongatha will rectify the mistakes they made against Traralgon last week and stop Warragul from winning game number 24 and a place in this year's grand final against Traralgon.

Two major things arose out of last week's game between the Gatha and Traralgon. The first is that Leongatha lack an effective forward while Bruce Clark is being used to add depth to an already strong backline. The other thing is that on a dry ground Leongatha seem much too slow, and will be hard pressed to match a running side of the Gull's ability.

Also, an important thing arose out of Warragul's first semi final performance and that is they have, with their tall players firing, an unstoppable and complete combination, blessed with speed and strength in a finely tuned machine.

Leongatha will match Warragul in the big man department. Ian Salmon, Geoff Tyson and Co. will be hard pressed to make any leeway against John McNicholas and Fred De Riter, so the ruck duels will be pretty even. However, I favor the Gull's Robert Ballingall to just be a bit more effective than Jeremy Bultjens.

The roving battles will be fairly even also with the likes of Richie Cochrane, Andrew Warren and Paul Goss having enough ability to hold Howard Cropley, Alan Ross, Simon Hogan and Michael Vick, if not completely, then reasonably well. It is here that the Gulls can cause chaos if allowed any latitude.

As I have said, Leongatha's forward line, if Paul Heppel is held and the likes of Goss and Willie Cochrane are kept quiet, will struggle. However, Warragul's forward line with Dunkley, Hodge, Kilday and Ridgeway the prime movers has a lot of bite, especially if the Gull's little men move the ball accurately forward. And they should on the big Vale St ground, especially if the track is hard and therefore fast.

Leongatha have the best backline in the competition and with Brian Salmon, Col Boyd, Hanrahan, Des Thorsen and Bruce Clark all doing well, the Parrots stopped many Traralgon goal opportunities

and will do the same to Warragul. However, I have my doubts if they can stand up to a prolonged 100 minute attack.

Warragul's backline is workmanlike, nothing flash just good old fashioned defensive work with a minimum of fuss. So in such an even encounter, where will this year's preliminary final be won?

The game will be won before the siren sounds at 2.30 pm, because two masters of psychological warfare in Neville Stone and Graeme Gahan will have the winners or they won't it's as simple as that.

For the Gull's to win they must go out in similar fashion to last week — low key and determined, no complacency just an over-riding will to win. The Gull's will do this, as they must look toward the grand final knowing they have a decisive mental edge over the Maroons.

Leongatha will have the old inter-town rivalry to spur them on, but I feel they have the big job ahead of them to lift themselves from a defeat and bounce back to have another go at the Maroons. Leongatha have the ability to apply immense physical and mental pressure on an opponent as they did last start, but they must not sacrifice too much of their own game to achieve it as they did against Traralgon.

I feel Warragul will respond well to the pressure and with the psychological edge, will just be too good in the end. As long as their confidence does not blunt their determination on the ground.

THIS WEEKS GAMES

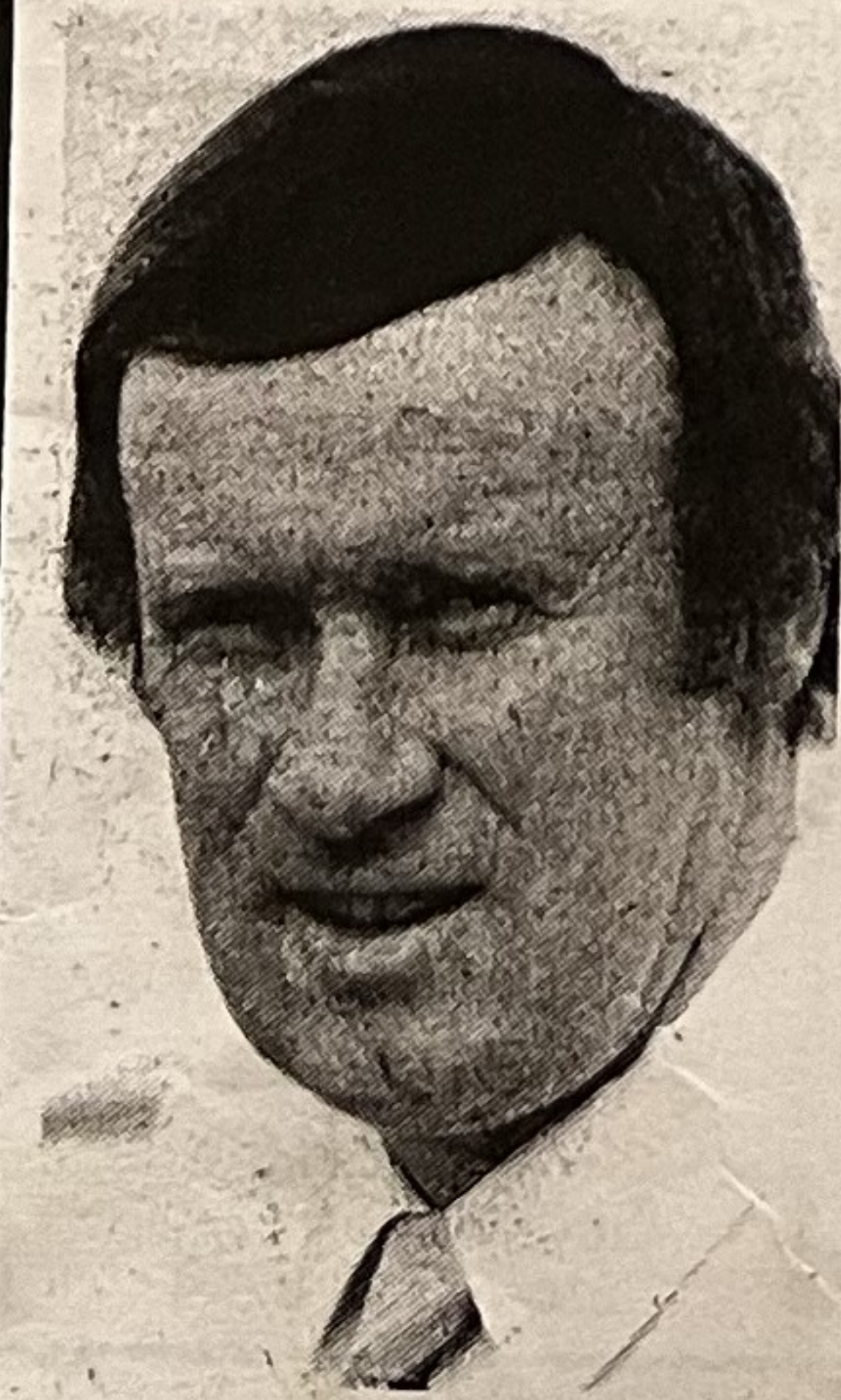
LVFL Preliminary finals tomorrow (Saturday September 15).

Seniors — 2.30 pm: Leongatha (home rooms, gold shorts) v Warragul (visitors rooms, red shorts).

Reserves — 12 noon: Traralgon (home rooms, maroon shorts) v Warragul (visitors rooms, red shorts).

Thirds — 9.30 am: Traralgon (home rooms, maroon shorts) v Sale (visitors rooms, black shorts).

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TREVOR SOMERVILLE...as he is today.