



MCC LIBRARY FACT SHEET

MAY 25, 2025

AFL 2025 Round 11

NARRM V SYDNEY

MELBOURNE'S BIG WIN – ROUND 1, 1971

After retiring as Melbourne coach at the end of the 1967 season, Norm Smith was appointed coach of South Melbourne in 1969. In his first season, the Swans finished ninth on the ladder, but, the following year he took them to the finals for the first time since 1945. South finished the 1970 season in fourth position and faced the third-placed St Kilda in the first semi-final. St Kilda won this game by 53 points, although the Swans led by five points at half-time. Melbourne finished the 1970 season in tenth position.

Given their 1970 form, the result of the first-round clash between the Demons and Swans in 1971 was somewhat surprising – the Demons winning by 105 points. The final scores were **Melbourne 24.21 (165)** defeated **South Melbourne 7.18 (60)**. For Melbourne, Barry Bourke, Lloyd Burgmann, Paul Callery, John Gallus and John Townsend all kicked three goals, while South's only multiple goalkicker was Peter Bedford with two. The best players for Melbourne were Denis Clark, Paul Callery, Stan Alves, Graeme Molloy, John Townsend, Lloyd Burgmann, Trevor Rollinson, Robert McKenzie and Frank Davis. Best for South were Ernie Hug, Russell Cook, Fred Way, Wayne Walsh, Gary Brice and Bob Skilton.

Reporting on the match for the Melbourne Age, Paul Speelman wrote that Melbourne had won “all over the ground from start to finish.” He added that: “The Melbourne fans loved it.” and gave new coach Ian Ridley a standing ovation at the end of the game. Speelman thought that the Demons had shown real “promise” but wondered how they would fare under pressure? Melbourne was an inexperienced team, Ridley pointing out that only four team members had played more than 100 games and another five more than 50. The Demons continued their good form in the first half of the 1971 season, winning nine of their first 11 games, but they couldn't keep it up and finished the season in seventh position with 11 wins, 10 losses and one draw.

Speelman found it harder to pinpoint the reasons for South Melbourne's poor form in Round 1, indicating that coach Norm Smith was “stuck for words” at the end of the game, while captain Bob Skilton passed it off as being “one of those days”. Unfortunately, the Swans' form did not improve. They finished on the bottom of the ladder with only three wins for the season.

PLAYED FOR BOTH

Gerard Healy played 130 games with Melbourne from 1979 until 1985, kicking 189 goals. Recruited from Edithvale/Aspendale, he won Melbourne's best and fairest award in 1984 and was runner-up in 1985. Playing mainly in the mid-field or on the ball, he was also a very damaging goal scorer who led the Melbourne goal kicking in 1982 with 77. Targeted by the Sydney Swans in their recruiting spree under Dr Edelsten, he moved to Sydney in 1986. He played 81 games and kicked 87 goals for the Swans from 1986 until 1990. He won the club's best and fairest award in 1986, 1987 and 1988. Healy was a regular selection for Victoria, playing 12 matches from 1982 to 1988. He gained All Australian selection in 1986, 1987 and 1988. He had a stellar 1988 season, winning the Brownlow Medal, the AFL Players' Association MVP award (the Leigh Matthews trophy) and the E J Whitten Medal as the best player in the Victoria versus Western Australia state-of-origin game in Perth. His Brownlow win was made even more meritorious by the fact that he played the latter part of the 1988 season in severe pain due to a torn stomach muscle. Gerard's grandfather, Bill O'Brien, had played two games with South Melbourne in 1930 while his brother, Greg, represented Melbourne from 1984 to 1993 in 141 games with 167 goals. Greg captained Melbourne from 1988 to 1990. After his playing career ended, Gerard became a Victorian selector and later Victorian Chairman of Selectors. He also embarked on a successful career in the media as a football commentator and analyst.

OVER TO YOU

1. In which year did Melbourne win their first VFL premiership?
2. In which year did South Melbourne win their first VFL premiership?
3. Who replaced Norm Smith as Melbourne coach in 1968?
4. Who did Norm Smith replace as South Melbourne coach in 1969?
5. How many times was Ian Ridley a premiership player with Melbourne?
6. In what year did Peter Bedford win the Brownlow Medal?
7. Who am I? I played 175 games for Melbourne from 1946 to 1956, was captain in 1955-56 and was a member of the Demons' 1948, 1955 and 1956 premiership sides. I coached South Melbourne in 54 games from 1962 to 1964.

THIS ROUND IN HISTORY - ROUND 11 AT THE MCG

The highest Round 11 score at the MCG is 25.11 (161) by Collingwood against St Kilda in 1995. The overall record is 25.29 (179) by Fitzroy against Geelong 8.8 (56) at the Brunswick Street Oval in 1944. The most goals in a Round 11 game at the MCG is 12 by Bob Johnson Snr for Melbourne against Hawthorn in 1933. The overall Round 11 record is 15 by Gordon Coventry for Collingwood against Essendon at Victoria Park in 1933. The highest score in a quarter in this round at the MCG is 10.5 (65) which has been achieved twice, both times by Richmond against Footscray. The first instance was in the third quarter of a 1970 clash and the second in the last quarter in a 1978 match. The overall Round 11 record for the highest score in a quarter is 11.5 (71) by Fitzroy against Geelong in the third quarter at Brunswick Street in 1944. The highest Round 11 attendance at the MCG is 87,653 in 1989 when Geelong defeated Essendon by 54 points. The overall Round 11 attendance record is 92,935 at Waverley Park in 1981 when Hawthorn defeated Collingwood by 46 points.

STATISTICS FOR MELBOURNE V SYDNEY

Melbourne v Sydney by venue

	Won by Melbourne	Won by Sydney	Drawn
Cazalys Stadium	0	1	0
Docklands Stadium	0	2	0
Junction Oval	0	2	0
Lake Oval	28	39	0
Manuka Oval	0	3	0
MCG	51	47	2
Princes Park	1	1	0
Punt Road Oval	2	3	0
SCG	11	16	0
Stadium Australia	1	0	0
Waverley Park	2	4	0
	96	118	2

Highest Score

Melbourne	26.21 (177)	Rd 15	1991	SCG
Sydney	29.15 (189)	Rd 17	1986	SCG

Lowest Score

Melbourne	0.8 (8)	Rd 12	1912	MCG
South Melb.	2.3 (15)	Rd 6	1898	MCG

Greatest Winning Margin

Melbourne	107 points	Rd 6	1939	MCG
Sydney	124 points	Rd 17	1986	SCG

Most Goals in a Match (10 goals or more)

12	L. White	South Melb.	Rd 5	1942	PP
10	R. Osborne	Sydney	Rd 13	1993	SCG

Last Time They Met – Opening Round, 2024, SCG

	Sydney	Melbourne
Quarter time	3.3	1.6
Half time	4.3	2.8
Three-quarter time	7.10	7.8
Full time	12.14 (86)	9.10 (64)

FACT SHEETS ON THE MCC WEBSITE

The MCC Library's matchday fact sheets can be accessed through the MCC website at:

<http://tinyurl.com/mcccatalogue>

PLAYED FOR BOTH

Jamie Duursma was a defender, who started his career with the Hawthorn Reserves, before playing with VFA club Sandringham. He made his senior VFL debut for Sydney in 1985. He played 25 games, and kicked four goals, for the Swans in 1985 and 1986 before he was recruited by the Brisbane Bears for their inaugural VFL season in 1987. Selected for only one game with the Bears, he joined Melbourne the following season, playing 33 games for the Demons in 1988 and 1989. His career was hampered by knee injuries and, at the end of 1989, he headed back to his old side Sandringham. He later moved to Rochester Football Club in the Goulburn Valley Football League where he played in their 1992 premiership side.

DID YOU KNOW?

From 1956 to 1971 a night premiership was held at South Melbourne's home ground, the Lake Oval in Albert Park after the home and away season had ended. Apart from 1957, when all 12 VFL teams took part, this competition featured the eight teams that had failed to reach the finals. South Melbourne took out three of the first five Lake Oval night premierships, winning in 1956, 1957 and 1960. The Swans were also runners-up in 1967. Melbourne lost the night grand final in both 1969 and 1970 before winning what was to be the last night series held at the Lake Oval in 1971.

OVER TO YOU ANSWERS:

Q1 1900. **Q2** 1909. **Q3** John Beckwith. **Q4** Alan Miller. **Q5** Five – 1955, 1956, 1957, 1959 and 1960. **Q6** 1970. **Q7** Noel McMahan.

Fact sheets are prepared by MCC Library Volunteers David Allen, Eric Panther, Quentin Miller, Dennis Carroll, Ian Wilkinson, Gaye Fitzpatrick, and Edward Cohen, with MCC Deputy Librarian Trevor Ruddell and the assistance of Col Hutchinson of the AFL.