

# IMAGES OF YALLOURN

## LVFL GRAND FINAL: YALLOURN v SALE

1955



### INTRODUCTION

As the 2022 AFL Finals approach, the above press release may prove of interest to football followers and former supporters of Yallourn Football Club.

The press cutting was found in 'The Argus' (on September 9<sup>th</sup> 1955 on Page 22) and is a preview of the 1955 Latrobe Valley FL Grand Final between Sale and Yallourn which was played at Morwell. 'The Argus' was a popular metropolitan newspaper; and the item indicates the status which the Latrobe Valley Football League held in those years. Former residents of Yallourn may well remember such club champions as Gerald Marchesi, Stan Brown, Peter Cook, Ken McColl, Jack Vinall and Roy Cullinan.

The text of the above match preview is printed below.

### YALLOURN HAS THE SPEED TO BLANKET SALE

*“ WET or dry Yallourn appears to have the players to counter Sale's trump cards in the Latrobe Valley Football League grand final at Morwell tomorrow. ”*

*Morwell's ground last week was muddy, but unless heavy rain falls before tomorrow it should be in good condition, and last year's gate of £1,000 could be exceeded.*

*Yallourn started its run six weeks ago and although it just scraped into the four it has hit top form. Sale was struggling to defeat Warragul, in the second semi-final, but Yallourn last week had a comfortable victory.*

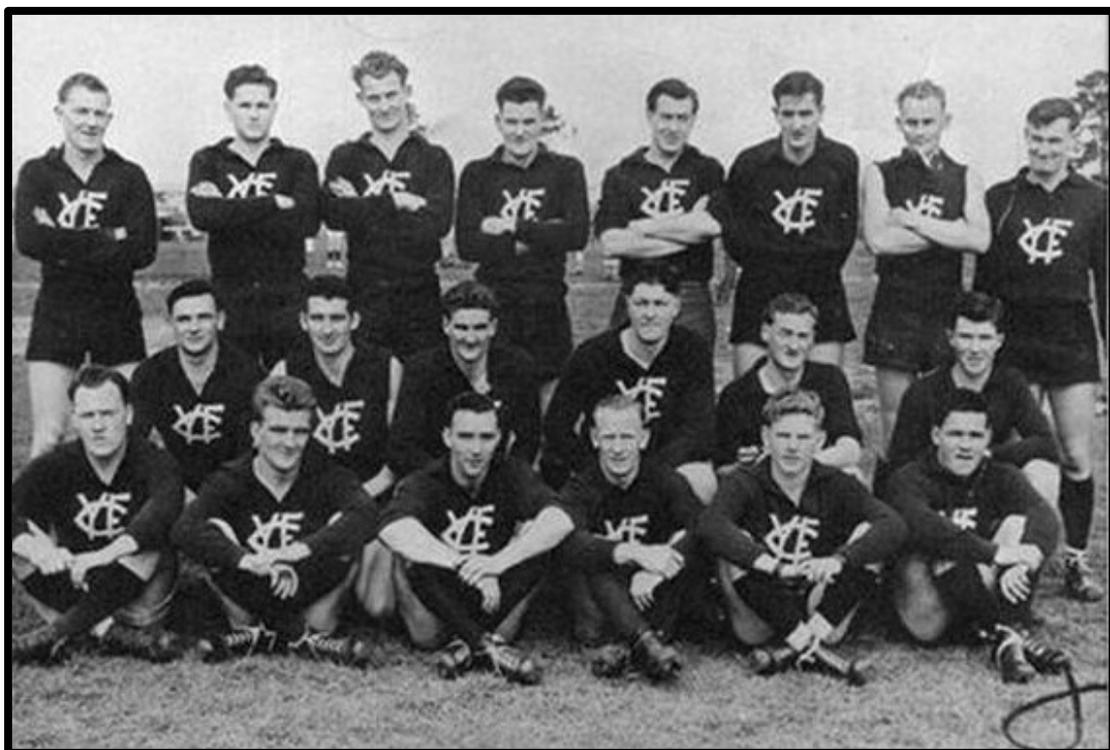
*Sale, to hold its place on top of the League ladder, developed blistering pace and a play-on style. Any slight loss of form on the part of Yallourn could prove fatal. Sale's trumps are Orchard and King on the wing, Mason and Morrow in the ruck. Brewer on the half forward line and the Hart Brothers in the roving division.*

*Yallourn has the player, Stan Brown, in the back pocket to counter McKee; and McColl is in brilliant form at centre half-back and should match Brewer in the air. Cook and Vinall are strong players on Yallourn's half forward line.*

*Captain-coach Marchesi, formerly of North Melbourne, has blossomed into a capable full forward and former South Melbourne seconds full back Cullinan has developed into a handy goal sneak as a permanent forward pocket.*

*Sale has a good full forward in C. Smith, but Yallourn half-back line may cut off his supply. Sale will be trying to use its successful play on tactics and has a shrewd tactician in non-playing coach Hughie Murnane."*

#### **THE YALLOURN GRAND FINAL TEAM PHOTOGRAPH -1955**



**Back Row: K. Fanning, P. Cook, B. Knight, K. Gibson, L. Shipp, P. Watkinson, K. McColl, J Watt**

**Middle Row: M. Williams, J. Brown, R. Cullinan, G. Marchesi, S. Brown, J. Vinall**

**Front Row: D. Madden, R. Kitney, C. Whitbourne, J. Shaw, B. Coad, M. Crane**

## The LINE- UP FOR YALLOURN THAT DAY

Backs:	Stan Brown	Keith Gibson	Kevin Fanning
HB:	Jim Watt	Ken McColl	Jim Brown
C:	Ray Kitney	Mossie Williams	Claude Whitbourne
HF:	Jack Vinall	Peter Cook	Barry Coad
F:	Laurie Shipp	Gerald Marchesi	Roy Cullinan
Rucks:	Bruce Knight	Des Madden	Jimmy Shaw
19th:	Peter Watkinson	20th:	Merv Crane



The 'Argus' swap card of Gerald Marchesi-Yallourn's coach that day

## GRAND FINAL FEVER HITS THE SALE SUPPORTERS

Sale FC had won the LVFL premiership in 1954; and had been the glamour team of the competition for two seasons. With class footballers across all lines and an astute coach in Hugh Murnane (ex-Melbourne 1937-40), Sale had taken Gippsland football standards to a new level. Hugh, a renowned tactician and progressive thinker, had built Sale's game around 'quick ball movement' and 'playing on' at every opportunity.

The arrival of the Sale supporters, on board a special train, to the Morwell Railway Station generated considerable interest (and noise)...

*"Twelve hundred war-whooping Sale supporters travelled the 38 miles (63km) to Morwell in a ten-car special train bedecked in the colours and flags with a Sale 'maggie' on the front of the engine."*

Furthermore, a colourful description of Sale's 'black and white army' continued... *"Behind the leaders came ten pretty majorettes...then the Sale City Band played 'Blaze Away'...."* Talk about Joshua's arrival at the walls of Jericho!

## **YALLOURN'S STAR-STUDED FORWARD LINE**

Meanwhile the Yallourn players had their own ideas on how to add a bit of life to the day; and that was by using 'shock tactics' via the selection table. What a forward line the Yallourn selectors had decided upon as Laurie Shipp, Gerald Marchesi and Roy Cullinan had all played VFL football and the trio shaped as a most imposing attack.

The move of Gerald to full forward had been a stroke of genius in the lead-up to the finals; and his ability to find the 'big sticks' would have been a worry to Hugh Murnane and the Sale bench that day.

*"Captain Gerald Marchesi...has blossomed into a capable forward...and former South Melbourne seconds player Cullinan (Roy) has developed into a handy goal sneak as a permanent forward pocket." 'The Argus.'*

Furthermore, Peter Cook was a brilliant footballer; and there is no doubt that the Sale selectors would have 'burnt the late night oil' in working out how to best negate Peter's influence across half forward for the Blues.

## **YALLOURN WIN THE FIRST HALF IN A TENSE BATTLE**

The game was a titanic struggle from the first bounce. Both defences were in control as all forwards struggled to find space and convert opportunities.

In those days, defence was based upon 'man-on-man' tactics and 'zone defence' (which dominates modern coaching thinking) was unheard of in Australian Rules football.

Yallourn's defence, led by Kevin Fanning, was superb in repelling Sale attacks and keeping the Magpies at bay. The Blues led by 17 points at half time.

The key question at the back of everyone's mind, as the teams headed for the sheds at the big break, was... 'Could the Yallourn defenders stand tall for another fifty minutes?' The answer came quickly in the third term.

## SALE RALLIES IN THE THIRD QUARTER



**The 'Kornies' swap card of Yallourn's famous ruckman Laurie Shipp.**

Hughie Murnane must have 'fired a rocket' during his half time address because Sale hit the ground running. Great teams respond when the outcome is in doubt and Sale 'took the game on.' Led by Alan Morrow, the Magpies began to penetrate the Blues' tight defence; and the balance of the contest shifted in a dramatic manner.

The game suddenly 'opened up' and the 'lock down' style of the Blues' defence collapsed and Sale kicked 5.4. (34) to Yallourn's solitary point for the quarter. Sale's surge bamboozled the Blues' and the half back line of Jim Watt, Ken McColl and young Jim Brown were under enormous pressure as the Sale centre line took charge and created opportunities up forward.

It is often said that in a football match, the third term is 'the premiership quarter' and the game slipped from Yallourn's grasp in those vital minutes. It was a disastrous quarter for Yallourn and only a 'full blooded charge' in the final stanza could reverse the likely outcome.



**'Mossie' Williams who starred for Yallourn in the 1955 Grand Final.**

## A LATE BUT UNSUCCESSFUL FIGHTBACK BY YALLOURN

The Blues reacted with character and true grit. Rovers Barry Coad and Jimmy Shaw were defiant in the face of defeat; and, along with 'Mossie' Williams, gave the Blues supporters some hope. The Blues edged back within two goals but time was against them and the Magpies clung onto secure the premiership flag and climb aboard the 'victory train' back to Sale.

The winner takes all in Grand Finals; and the Sale supporters were feverish in triumph *"...it seemed everyone (from Sale) had won Tatts."* There had been little between the two great teams, but the result again underlined the significance of the 'third quarter' in finals matches. In the wash-up the scoreboard told the truth of the matter.

### QUARTER BY QUARTER SCORES:

**Sale :**      2.4  3.7  8.11  11.13  (79)  
**Yallourn:** 2.3  6.6  6.7  10.9  (69)

### MATCH DETAILS

**Goals for Sale:**            Morrow 3; Smith 3; McKee 2; Stanes 2; T.Hart 1  
**Goals for Yallourn :** Cullinan 4; Marchesi 2; Cook 2; Coad 1; Fanning 1  
**Best for Sale:**            Brewer, T.Hart, Mason, Morrow, Finegan, Stanley, J. Hart, Felstenthal  
**Best for Yallourn:**      Coad, Fanning, McColl, Williams, Marchesi, Shaw, Knight, Gibson, Shipp

### FOOTNOTES

1. For those readers interested in football history, stories about many of the above players can be found on this website. Simply type in the word 'football' in the search field (at the top right hand side of the page) and press enter.
2. The Virtual Yallourn website welcomes photos and articles of past teams, former players and match reports. Perhaps readers may have something related to the YFC that would add to history file. Please feel welcome to contact Julie if you would like to have something posted on the website. Thank you

This article was researched and written by Roger Spaul and presented and posted by Julie George for the Virtual Yallourn website in September 2022.