DOM COUP ADDS REAL BUZZ

By JORDAN GERRANS

TERRITORY Thunder have pulled off a massive recruiting coup, securing the signature of former Melbourne Demon Dom Barry.

The 20-year-old Centralian has returned to his home turf and will don the Thunder guernsey during the 2015 NEAFL season, just months after quitting the AFL.

Barry played five AFL matches after debuting for the Demons against the Western Bulldogs in Round 13 last year.

The 183cm indigenous talent will bring a touch of class to the midfield, complementing such names as Cameron Ilett, Shannon Rioli and Richard Tambling.

Coach Xavier Clarke said he was delighted.

“He will add excitement and experience to the Thunder side,” Clarke said. “Dom can be used as either a running half-back or an on-baller, adding depth to our midfield.”

Thunder chief executive Jarred Ilett hinted in yesterday’s NT News the club was close to getting the Barry deal over the line.

Ilett said Barry would help “fill a hole” left by Abywn Davey’s exit.

Barry, who played his junior football at Federal, has taken up a mentor role with indigenous students and junior footballers in Alice Springs.

He is back in the Red Centre after spending time in Victoria and the APY lands since quitting the Demons in November.

Barry started work earlier this week at St Philip’s College and will work as an assistant to the college’s Aboriginal and Islander Education support worker Rene Taylor.

He will work in a leadership and mentor role to the estimated 90 indigenous or Islander children enrolled at St Philip’s.

“We were approached by Dom and he has come on board with us,” Taylor said.

“It is three days in and it feels like he’s been here forever.” Taylor said she expected Barry to work with the college throughout 2015.

Since arriving back in Alice, Barry has attended the past four training sessions with the Thunder’s Southern Region Squad.

NT Thunder south development manager Stan Coombe said Barry had been exceptional for Central Australian-based players with ambitions to play at this year’s AFL National Under-18 and Under-16 Championships.

“It has been good for the young blokes to train alongside with a guy that is just out of the AFL,” Coombe said.