

Cats need to forget Ablett, go with youth

ELIZA SEWELL

IT's a romantic notion, the prodigal son returning.

Gary back a Cat.

But yesterday at Etihad Stadium, it was hard to see Gary Ablett being Geelong's future — even if Geelong is his.

Would Ablett have helped Geelong based on the evidence presented to fans against the Dees? Of course.

But they don't need him.

And it's stark when you see the young, fresh Demons. Ablett can't be the Cats future.

Geelong should commit to their kids, they're good.

Melbourne has done it, and after long, lean seasons, that strategy is now inarguably paying dividends, even if it didn't get the result, losing the match by 29 points.

The young'uns on Geelong's forward flank, first-gamer James Parsons and third-gamer Brandan Parfitt were super impressive.

They assisted the classy Daniel Menzel and the hulking Tom Hawkins perfectly.

Lincoln McCarthy was also great.

Patrick Dangerfield started slowly, but quickly he joined partner in crime Joel Selwood at the top of the Cats statistical leaderboard and finished with three goals.

The Demons are fast. So lively. Oozing youth. They missed the forward target of the suspended Jesse Hogan.

Christian Petracca is a bull. Todd Viney likewise. The 22-gamer Jayden Hunt was amazing. His running goal from 50m, after marking a rushed Joel Selwood kick out of defence was something else.

The pressure they put on the Cats was immense, 12 more tackles than Geelong.

Max Gawn was crucial early, but he was cruelled by a hamstring injury in the second term and took no further part. It hurt the Dees.

A pair of rusted on Geelong members sat on the wing on Level 2 yesterday. They love Gary. But would they take him back?

No. There'd be no advantage for their side, they said.

I reckon they're right.

GEELONG V MELBOURNE

CATS	5.2 9.2 14.2 20.6	126
DEMONS	2.4 7.11 12.17 13.19	97

GOALS

Geelong: T Hawkins 5 D Menzel 4 P Dangerfield 3 M Blicavs 2 S Motlop 2 B Parfitt J Selwood L McCarthy Z Smith
Melbourne: D Kent 2 J Watts 2 A Neal-Bullen B Stretch C Petracca J Garlett J Harmes J Hunt M Hannan N Jetta T Smith

BEST

Geelong: J Selwood P Dangerfield D Menzel T Hawkins M Blicavs T Ruggles B Parfitt

Melbourne: N Jones J Hunt J Watts J Viney B Stretch A Neal-Bullen D Kent

UMPIRES
S Ryan J Mollison B Hosking

CROWD
29,733 at Etihad Stadium

Tenacious Tigers reap reward with true grunt



Richmond's Jack Riewoldt, left, battles for position against Tom Barrass of the Eagles in their Round 3 AFL clash at the MCG yesterday. Riewoldt kicked one goal for the match as the determined Tigers won the four contest by 11 points

Picture: GETTY IMAGES

RICHMOND V WEST COAST

TIGERS	2.2 5.6 9.8 11.10	76
EAGLES	2.6 5.13 7.14 8.17	65

GOALS

Richmond: D Butler 2 D Martin 2 D Rioli 2 B Houli J Castagna J Riewoldt K Lambert S Grigg

West Coast: M LeCras 3 J Kennedy 2 J Cripps J Darling M Hutchings

BEST

Richmond: D Martin T Cotchin D Rioli R Conca D Astbury B Houli

West Coast: L Shuey A Gaff E Yeo J Darling M Hutchings

UMPIRES

R Chamberlain, B Rosebury, A Stephens

CROWD

42,523 at MCG

LEO SCHLINK

WINNING ugly has rarely been so fashionable at Punt Road.

Long mocked for defensive frailty and collectively soft mentality, Richmond have replaced extravagance with a blue collar grit.

Grunt is the new gold.

Recalibrated, Richmond still possess plenty of flair but, as influential as Dustin Martin, Alex Rance, Trent Cotchin, Daniel Rioli and Dan Butler

were yesterday in a gritty 11-point win over West Coast, Richmond's unbeaten start to the season is all about application.

Unconquered after three rounds for the first time since 1995, when they won their opening seven matches before losing to Geelong in the preliminary final, the Tigers' accountability is suddenly an impressive calling card.

Faced with the time and motion masters from the west, Richmond didn't panic when

they may have as the strangely inaccurate Eagles built a 13-point lead in the second term.

Attitude saw to that. Just as desperate mindset drove the Tigers to critical edges in the most important metrics of all — notably tackling (75-60) and contested ball (161-135)

What those numbers do not illustrate is the gut running and willing to support that propelled the remarkable Martin into time and space for 40 disposals.

Not does it account for

Rance's preparedness to sacrifice and stifle as the conditions turned from balmy to Arctic.

His tally of 16 one-percenters was a match-high, while Jason Castagna's eight tackles represented a career-high.

Pressure — in defence and attack — has become Richmond's signature. And they deservedly reaped the rewards against a quality opponent.

In sunshine or rain, the Tigers were prepared to suffer in order to succeed — a quality not always obvious in recent

years at Punt Road. And while no player was as dominant as Martin, who managed to excel despite a cheekbone fracture, he was again the talisman.

With 33 kicks, seven hand-passes, five tackles and 2.1, Martin was pivotal in ensuring the Tigers didn't lose before he was critical to making sure they succeeded.

And when the match hovered in an uneasy balance in teeming rain, Richmond's pace and relentless tackling delivered an invaluable victory.

Preuss rules ruck against jubilant Giants

ADAM SMITH

TWO years ago Todd Goldstein was the All-Australian ruckman and North Melbourne's Syd Barker medallist after a dominant season which lifted the Roos into the preliminary final.

Three games into 2017 and he has arguably been overtaken as the club's No.1 big man by a rookie sensation.

Braydon Preuss, pictured, might only have three senior matches under his belt but his performance in yesterday's 42-point loss to flag favourites GWS showed just how highly rated the 21-year-



old is by coach Brad Scott.

Despite Goldstein returning from an ankle injury which ruled him out of last week's clash against Geelong, Preuss squared off against Shane Mumford at the first bounce at Blundstone Arena and shouldered most of the ruck work throughout the day. Far from overawed by taking on one of the league's behemoths, the 206cm, 109kg rugby league convert threw himself into the contest to be one of the most influential players on the ground.

By halftime he had accumulated nine possessions, five marks, 15 hit-outs and two goals — one a 60m bomb off a step in the first quarter and the first major of the second when he grabbed the ball from a boundary throw-in, snapped on his left 20m out and got a bounce which would have pleased Shane Warne.

Goldstein, spending a lot more time forward, had just three hit-outs with his nine touches and a goal. By the final siren, Preuss had 16 possessions, nine marks and 26 hit-outs in an epic battle with Mumford but it wasn't enough to prevent North from

starting the season 0-3, as the Giants spoiled Jack Ziebell's 150th celebrations.

Josh Kelly — who had been in the headlines all week following the reported \$9 million, nine-year offer being prepared by North — put in another best-on-ground effort, chalking up 31 disposals while adding 1.1, with Dylan Shiel, Callan Ward and Tom Scully combining for 81 touches between them.

Star forward Jeremy Cameron finished with 3.3, but after he, Kelly and Sam Reid all rattled the woodwork in the third quarter, the 15-point lead at the final change should have been much bigger.

NTH MELBOURNE V GWS GIANTS

KANGAROOS	3.2 5.4 8.6 10.7	67
GIANTS	3.4 6.11 9.15 15.19	103

GOALS

Greater Western Sydney: J Cameron 3 T Greene 3 R Lobb 2 S Reid 2 C Ward J Hopper J Kelly N Wilson S Johnson

North Melbourne: B Preuss 2 A Swallow B Brown J Ziebell K Turner R Clarke T Dumont T Garner T Goldstein

BEST

Greater Western Sydney: S Mumford C Ward J Kelly T Greene D Shiel J Cameron

North Melbourne: B Preuss L Hansen J MacMillan J Ziebell

UMPIRES

J Schmitt, C Kamolins, C Deboy

CROWD

8758 at Blundstone Arena