



1990 AFL Grand Final

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The **1990 AFL Grand Final** was an Australian rules football game contested between the Collingwood Football Club and the Essendon Football Club, held at the Melbourne Cricket Ground in Melbourne on 6 October 1990. It was the 94th annual Grand Final of the Australian Football League (formerly the Victorian Football League), staged to determine the premiers for the 1990 AFL season. The match, attended by 98,944 spectators, was won by Collingwood by a margin of 48 points, marking that club's 14th premiership victory.

Background

Collingwood had made nine unsuccessful Grand Final attempts (including the famous draw in the 1977 VFL Grand Final against North Melbourne), in the previous 32 years, not having won a premiership since the 1958 VFL Grand Final. Essendon had last played a Grand Final in 1985, which it had won against Hawthorn; that match was the last game of Collingwood coach and then-Hawthorn forward Leigh Matthews' playing career.

At the conclusion of the home and away season, Essendon had finished first on the AFL ladder with 17 wins and 5 losses. Collingwood had finished second with 16 wins and 6 losses. The top five qualified for the finals, which were played under the McIntyre Final Five system.

Collingwood and West Coast played a draw in the Qualifying Final at Waverley Park in the first week of the finals. The match was replayed the following week, with Collingwood winning convincingly by 59 points to advance to the Second Semi-Final against Essendon. In the Second-Semi Final, Collingwood scored ten goals to two after half time to win by 63 points and advance to the Grand Final. Essendon faced West Coast in the Preliminary Final, winning by 63 points, to earn its place in the Grand Final.

Collingwood's drawn game with West Coast caused the Grand Final and all other finals to be delayed by a week from the originally scheduled dates. This proved controversial, because in the second semi-final, it had been 21 days since Essendon's last competitive match, due to receiving a bye in the first week of the finals, following by the replayed Qualifying Final in the second week; Essendon had played an unofficial practice match against 12th-placed Fitzroy during the second week.^[1] For the 1991 and successive AFL seasons, the rules were changed to allow extra time to be played in finals, excluding the Grand Final, if scores were level at the end of the fourth quarter. The first final to require extra time was four years later in the 1994 Qualifying Final between North Melbourne and Hawthorn.

Match summary

First quarter

The match began with Essendon starting strongly, as the Bombers' beanpole full-forward **Paul Salmon** kicked two early goals from strong marks. The signs looked ominous for Collingwood who were unable to penetrate before a classic goal by **Peter Daicos** from the boundary followed by a late goal by **Gavin Brown** from an Essendon turnover gave the inaccurate Magpies a three-point lead, and considerable momentum, at the first change.

Quarter time brawl

At the sounding of the quarter time siren, a wild brawl erupted in the Essendon forward pocket drawing all players on the ground and spreading to include team officials. During the brawl, Gavin Brown was flattened by **Terry Daniher** in retaliation for Brown felling **Kieran Sporn**. The umpires, police, stadium security and Channel Seven boundary rider **Bernie Quinlan** were needed to restore order. In the aftermath ten players and officials were reported (see below for details). The violent brawl, beamed live across Australia and the world, shocked viewers, fans and officials alike, and would be the catalyst for the AFL to crack down on violence in the game, leading to greater penalties and severe fines for players engaging in brawls.

Second quarter

Following the brawl, the umpires took a hard line on any indiscretions. Collingwood, playing in front at the contests, benefitted from this, and won several free kicks and fifty metre penalties, from which they scored five goals in the first nine minutes of the quarter. Essendon never really recovered from this purple patch, and after finishing with six goals to one in the second quarter, Collingwood led by 34 points at half time.

Third quarter

Collingwood continued strongly after half time, whilst Kevin Sheedy had shuffled his Essendon players into different position all across the ground in an attempt to bridge the deficit, mirroring his successful 3/4 time efforts in the 1984 VFL Grand Final. **Craig Starcevich** was knocked out by Terry Daniher after taking a mark, with **Mick McGuane** taking his kick and goalling from the resultant 50 metre penalty. Peter Daicos scored a spectacular goal from near the behind post to extend

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1	2	3	4	
COL 2.5 (17)	8.9 (57)	11.10 (76)	13.11 (89)	
ESS 2.2 (14)	3.5 (23)	5.6 (36)	5.11 (41)	
Date		6 October 1990, 2.30pm		
Stadium		Melbourne Cricket Ground		
Attendance		98,944		
Umpires		Sawers, Rich		
Ceremonies				
Pre-match entertainment		Normie Rowe		
National anthem		Normie Rowe		
Accolades				
Norm Smith		Tony Shaw		
Medallist		(Collingwood)		
Broadcast in Australia				
Network		Seven Network		
← 1989	AFL Grand Final	1991 →		

Collingwood's margin to 46 points. Essendon scored the next two goals midway through the third quarter with two quick goals, before Gavin Brown goaled late to give Collingwood a 40-point lead at three-quarter time.

Fourth quarter

Essendon attacked and dominated the play early in the last quarter but could only manage behinds, including hitting the post twice from set shots. After absorbing the Essendon pressure for twenty minutes, Collingwood's Doug Barwick scored the first goal of the quarter, with a snap shot from 25 metres. The siren sounded soon after Damian Monkhorst goaled to make the margin 48 points. Essendon was held goalless in the final quarter.

The Norm Smith Medal was awarded to Collingwood's Tony Shaw for being judged the best player afield, with 32 possessions in an inspirational display. He was the first team captain to be awarded the medal.

This win represented the first for Leigh Matthews as coach. He had previously captained Hawthorn to Grand Finals in the 1980s, and later went on to coach the Brisbane Lions to premierships (one of them against Kevin Sheedy's Bombers) in the 2000s.

Many of Essendon's senior players would retire or move on in the following two seasons, however their next Grand Final appearance came three years later, when the Baby Bombers (so named because of the astounding number of players they had under 21) surprised the football world and won the 1993 AFL Grand Final against Carlton. Collingwood did not win another premiership for 20 years, until they defeated St Kilda in 2010.

Teams

Collingwood Football Club				Essendon Football Club			
B:	44 Shane Kerrison	21 Michael Christian	12 Denis Banks	B:	16 Paul Hamilton	6 Anthony Daniher	5 Terry Daniher
HB:	7 Shane Morwood	23 Craig Kelly	3 Michael Gayfer	HB:	7 Chris Daniher	10 Gary O'Donnell	29 David Grenvold
C:	42 Darren Millane	22 Tony Shaw (c)	19 Graham Wright	C:	11 Greg Anderson	9 Derek Kickett	23 Peter Cransberg
HF:	29 Scott Russell	35 Peter Daicos	17 Doug Barwick	HF:	32 Tim Watson (c)	18 Paul Van Der Haar	4 Michael Long
F:	26 Gavin Brown	1 Damian Monkhorst	28 Gavin Crosisca	F:	15 Alan Ezard	3 Paul Salmon	8 Darren Bewick
Foll:	30 James Manson	34 Michael McGuane	2 Tony Francis	Foll:	27 Simon Madden	1 Mark Harvey	26 Mark Thompson
Int:	24 Jamie Turner	27 Craig Starcevich		Int:	17 Kieran Sporn	19 Peter Somerville	
Coach:	Leigh Matthews			Coach:	Kevin Sheedy		

Scorecard

1990 AFL Grand Final				
Saturday, 6 October 2:30pm	<u>Collingwood</u>	def.	<u>Essendon</u>	<u>MCG</u> (crowd: 98,944)
	2.5 (17)	Q1	2.2 (14)	Umpires: Sawers, Rich
	8.9 (57)	Q2	3.5 (23)	Norm Smith Medal: Tony Shaw
	11.10 (76)	Q3	5.6 (36)	Television broadcast: <u>Seven Network</u>
	13.11 (89)	Final	5.11 (41)	National anthem: <u>Normie Rowe</u>
<u>Brown 2, Barwick 2, Crosisca 2, Russell 2, Daicos 2, Monkhorst, Starcevich, McGuane</u>	Goals	<u>Salmon 2, Kickett, Somerville, Grenvold</u>		
<u>Shaw, Russell, Monkhorst, Millane, Francis, Kerrison, Starcevich, Crosisca, McGuane</u>	Best	<u>Watson, Sporn, T. Daniher, Kickett, Ezard, O'Donnell</u>		
<u>Brown</u> (concussion), <u>Starcevich</u> (concussion)	Injuries	Nil		
<u>See Tribunal</u>	Reports	<u>See Tribunal</u>		
▪ Match was also broadcast on <u>3AW</u> and <u>3LO</u> radio				

Statistics

Tribunal

Ten players and officials were reported on a total of seventeen offences as a result of the brawl:

- Terry Daniher (Essendon): Charged with striking Gavin Brown and striking Craig Starcevich. Suspended for 12 matches.
- Graeme Allan (Collingwood football manager): Charged with striking Essendon runner Peter Power and conduct unbecoming of a team official. Suspended for six matches and fined \$15,000.
- Eddie Hillgrove (Collingwood team manager): Charged with assaulting Essendon bootstudder Graham Menola and conduct unbecoming of a team official. Suspended for six matches and fined \$7,500.
- Darren Bewick (Essendon): Charged with striking and rough conduct against Tony Shaw, kneeling Denis Banks, and striking Doug Barwick. Cleared of first three charges; suspended for four matches.
- Gavin Brown (Collingwood): Charged with striking Kieran Sporn. Suspended for three matches.
- Kieran Sporn (Essendon): Charged with striking Denis Banks. Suspended for two matches.
- John Synan (Essendon doorman): Charged with charging Collingwood team manager Eddie Hillgrove and conduct unbecoming of a team official. Fined \$5,000.

- Craig Kelly (Collingwood) and Paul Van Der Haar (Essendon): Charged with striking each other. Both found not guilty.
- Derek Kickett (Essendon): Charged with striking Mick McGuane. Found not guilty.

Postscript

In a tragic postscript, Collingwood player Darren Millane, who was in possession of the ball when the final siren sounded, was killed in a car accident one year and one day after this match.

See also

- 1990 AFL season

References

1. Rodgers, Stephen, *Every Game Every Played: VFL/AFL Results 1897–1991*, Ringwood, VIC: Viking O'Neal, p. 741
2. *Pos'ns* stands for Possessions.

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