

= Cyril Rioli =

Cyril Rioli ( born 14 July 1989 ) is a professional Australian rules footballer playing for the Hawthorn Football Club in the Australian Football League ( AFL ) . Primarily a forward pocket , Rioli also spends time in the midfield , although injury and hamstring injuries have limited his ability to spend long periods in the midfield .

= = Early life and junior football = =

= = = Family background = = =

Born to Cyril Jr. and Kathy in 1989 , Rioli comes from a bloodline of talented footballers . His father Cyril Jr. was a champion footballer in the Northern Territory and the brother of the late Richmond Norm Smith Medallist Maurice Rioli . Cyril Jr. played for Northern Territory Football League club St Mary 's , where he won 12 premiership medallions and the 1995 ? 96 Nichols Medal as the league 's best and fairest player . His mother Kathy is the sister of Essendon two @-@ time premiership player and 1993 Norm Smith Medallist Michael Long . Another former footballer , Dean Rioli , is his cousin . After the 2015 season his cousin Daniel was drafted to the Richmond Football Club .

= = = Northern Territory lifestyle = = =

He spent the first eight years of his life in the Tiwi Islands before moving with his family to Darwin in the Northern Territory , playing his younger years at St Mary 's also .

= = = Football scholarship = = =

Rioli moved to Melbourne in 2004 as a 14 @-@ year @-@ old , where he attended and boarded at Scotch College for four years whilst playing for the school 's football team . The move came about after a decade @-@ long relationship between the school and Indigenous communities of the Northern Territory . Dr. Rob Smith , a teacher at Scotch College , had expanded the school 's four @-@ week exchange program for talented Indigenous footballers into a full scholarship program , following numerous tours of the Tiwi Islands and specifically , Bathurst Island . Rioli was the first selected into the program . He originally made the trip alongside his cousin Steven , after just three days in Melbourne the two re @-@ packed their bags with the intention of returning home . In an effort to retain the boys , Smith phoned Michael Long , who came out to the school with Derek Kickett and Sibby Rioli , another uncle . Long said he knew Cyril was making a life @-@ defining choice at just 14 ; " That was the big moment , whether he 'd tough it out or go " . Steven returned home and Cyril persisted in Melbourne . Nicknamed " Junior " or " Junior Boy " , he shone in his final season with Scotch College , despite suffering injuries throughout the season ; including a broken collarbone and a severely damaged ankle . He developed somewhat of a cult following whilst playing for the school , following a video clip of his highlights being uploaded to YouTube . He has since stated that he believes the early move to school in Melbourne made the transition a lot easier .

Rioli was also a standout performer in the 2007 AFL national under 18 championships , becoming the only Northern Territorian to earn All @-@ Australian honours , following a seven @-@ goal performance in a match against Queensland . He was tipped to go high in the national draft , from anywhere between five and twenty @-@ five . In this final year of junior football , he was one of five players , including Trent Cotchin , to be chronicled in the book The Draft : Inside the AFL 's Search for Talent , by The Age journalist Emma Quayle .

Despite Rioli 's speed , evasiveness and flashy tricks , the scouts at the AFL 's draft camp were still to be convinced of his dedication , with his skin folds being described as " less than brilliant " and his commitment to AFL still being questionable . Prior to the draft , Rioli said " I have had a few clubs

call me , and it 's just confusing . I love playing footy , and I think I am pretty good at it , but it doesn 't really matter where ( I go in the draft ) . " He reportedly spoke to both the Kangaroos and the Adelaide Crows , before eventually being drafted by the Hawthorn Football Club in the 2007 AFL Draft . The Hawks used their first @-@ round draft pick and the number 12 pick overall to claim Rioli .

= = AFL career = =

= = = 2008 : Debut season and premiership = = =

Just four days after being drafted by the Hawks , Rioli was ordered to urgently organise a passport so he could attend the club 's trek of the Kokoda Track . He covered 90 % of his first pre @-@ season schedule for the club ; a very high volume of work for a first @-@ year player according to the head fitness coach Andrew Russell . Russell said , " Nobody that I worked with in the last four years at Hawthorn did that much in their first pre @-@ season . "

Rioli made his AFL debut in Hawthorn 's defeat of the Melbourne Football Club at the Melbourne Cricket Ground ( MCG ) in round one 2008 . He built a reputation around his ability to chase and pressure the opposition as they attempted to rebound from the forward line . In round six , he was nominated for the AFL Rising Star Award , after his display against Richmond , in which he received a nomination for Goal of the Year . Rioli appeared in every game in his debut season , including an inspirational performance in Hawthorn 's defeat of Geelong in the 2008 AFL Grand Final . His impact on the game was described as instrumental as Hawthorn defeated Geelong , in the club 's first premiership since 1991 . Rioli assisted in a couple of first quarter goals and kicked two goals for himself in the final , achieving a total of 10 possessions in the game . After the game Hawthorn coach Alastair Clarkson said , " We knew Cyril was a beauty , but you just never anticipate that they 're going to play every game of the season and be able to play in a grand final . " With nothing but praise for Rioli , Clarkson also made mention of his achievements in 2008 , " He 's got a premiership medal now , but he 's been in contention for mark of the year , goal of the year and the rising star and he 's been very , very consistent . He 's a 15 @-@ possession , five @-@ tackle a game player with a goal or two ? he 's been a sensational acquisition to our club .

Rioli finished second overall in the 2008 AFL Rising Star Award , the award was won by Fremantle 's Rhys Palmer with 44 votes , ahead of Rioli on 37 .

= = = 2009 : First injury and Hawthorn 's premiership hangover = = =

In February 2009 , Rioli was selected for the Indigenous All @-@ Stars that played a pre @-@ season match against the Adelaide Football Club . Following his successful debut season and promising start to his second , he was compared to Gary Ablett Jr . , who also began his career as a small forward with the potential to become a " dominant , match @-@ winning midfielder " . This was due to the " sublime skills " he displays , and his " ability to make something out of nothing with vision and an instinct for the game . " Former footballer and journalist Garry Lyon said in an article for The Age , that when Rioli is ready to take on a greater workload in the midfield , will be determined by his physical and aerobic capacity . Rioli 's greatest challenge in the coming 12 months being to incorporate the " gut " running into his game that the likes of Ablett , Chris Judd , Lenny Hayes and Brett Kirk have mastered .

In May , journalist Mike Sheahan proclaimed that Rioli 's exploits on the field were being overlooked . He said whilst Hawthorn as a club was being analysed and dissected , Rioli wasn 't getting the recognition he deserved . According to Champion Data , only captain Sam Mitchell had been more effective for Hawthorn at this time in the year . Following 36 consecutive games after being drafted , Rioli tore his hamstring in round 11 2009 against the Sydney Swans . Missing his first regular season match in round 12 , he spent a month on the sidelines before returning against North Melbourne in round 15 . The Hawks were defeated in all three games he missed . His return was

described as a " big boost " for Hawthorn 's last @-@ ditch bid to revive its season , after many commentators said the club was suffering a " premiership hangover " . Following his return , it was announced that Rioli had re @-@ signed with Hawthorn for a further three years . Hawthorn eventually faltered in the final round of the home and away season , losing to Essendon by 17 points . Thus , failing to qualify for the finals . Rioli 's season was however , still seen as impressive . In the AFL website 's end of year review , it was predicted that he will be considered an elite AFL player in the coming years .

Approaching the end of the 2009 season , Rioli bought his first apartment and declared his allegiance to spending his whole career with Hawthorn , he also revealed his intentions to help bring more players down from the Northern Territory ; " That 's the real goal for me , to get more kids drafted from the Northern Territory . " After Hawthorn 's demise in 2009 , Rioli gave his support to a project which aims to teach Indigenous people in remote areas about the damage drugs and alcohol can do to the brain . An image of him is used in flip charts developed by the Menzies School of Health Research as an example of a person with a healthy brain . Sheree Cairney , the lead researcher at Menzies School , says there is a lack of knowledge in remote communities about how to treat drug and alcohol addiction , with the problem being " very , very widespread . " At the end of 2009 , he was awarded the AFL Coaches Association award for Best Young Player , covering his first two years in football . He also received the Phil Manassa Medal ( Goal of the Year award ) for his round seven effort against Essendon , and came second in the Peter Crimmins Medal behind the club 's captain Sam Mitchell . When Rioli kicked the goal of the year , commentator Bruce McAvaney described him as a " delicious young footballer " and the description " delicious " has become strongly associated with both Rioli and McAvaney .

= = Personal life = =

Rioli married his childhood sweetheart , Shannyn Ah Sam , on 19 October 2014 at the George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens .

= = Statistics = =

Statistics are correct to the end of the 2014 season

= = Honours and achievements = =

Team

AFL Premiership ( Hawthorn ) : 2008 , 2013 , 2014 , 2015

Individual

U / 18 All @-@ Australian : 2007

AFL Rising Star Award nominee , round 6 2008

AFL Goal of the Year nominee , round 6 2008

AFL Rising Star Award runner @-@ up : 2008

Peter Crimmins Medal ( Club best and fairest ) , sixth place , 2008

AFLCA Best Young Player 2009

AFL Goal of the Year Winner , round 7 2009

Peter Crimmins Medal , second place , 2009

Peter Crimmins Medal , fourth place , 2010

All @-@ Australian team : 2012 , 2015

Norm Smith Medal : 2015