

= Tom Harley =

Thomas ' Tom ' Harley ( born 18 July 1978 ) is a former Australian rules footballer for the Geelong Football Club in the Australian Football League ( AFL ) . A defender at 1 @. @ 93 metres ( 6 ft 4 in ) and 95 kilograms ( 209 lb ) , Harley was a two @- @ time premiership @- @ winning captain at the club .

After a successful junior career which culminated with selection in the under @- @ 18 All @- @ Australian team , Harley was drafted to the Port Adelaide Football Club as a zone selection . Although an inaugural member of the club , Harley struggled to force his way into the senior team and spent the majority of his early years playing for Norwood in the South Australian National Football League ( SANFL ) . After making just one appearance for Port Adelaide , Harley was traded to the Geelong Football Club in exchange for the 37th draft pick in the 1998 AFL Draft .

Harley quickly established himself within the Geelong defence and received a range of accolades and club honours , including multiple Best Clubman awards . Prior to the 2007 AFL season , Harley was appointed club captain and went on to enjoy great individual and team success . He led the club to its first premiership in 44 years during 2007 , and became a dual premiership captain after their victory in 2009 . In between , he achieved All @- @ Australian honours as vice @- @ captain of the team , and won the AFL Players Association ( AFLPA ) Best Captain Award . Harley also participated in the 2008 AFL Hall of Fame all @- @ star game , and was inducted into the Geelong Football Club Hall of Fame .

He is noted for being a leading ambassador to various community campaigns , including the anti @- @ violence program ' Just Think ' and Barwon Health . Since his retirement as a player , Harley has undertaken various roles in the sporting industry : he currently holds positions as General Manager - Football Sydney Swans , .

= = Early life = =

One of three children born to Rick and Trish ( née Rofe ) Harley in Adelaide , South Australia . Tom played most of his junior football for the Walkerville Junior Football Club and St Peter 's College from the under ? 11s to under ? 15s .

Despite being regularly overlooked for a place in the elite South Australian junior state squads , he continued to follow the rest of the squad to training sessions in order to learn alongside them . Harley 's persistent attendance at training was rewarded when he was called up to the under ? 18s squad as a late injury replacement a week prior to the National AFL Championships . Playing at centre half @- @ back , Harley 's performance in defence earned him end @- @ of @- @ year All @- @ Australian honours and brought him to the attention of AFL scouts .

= = AFL career = =

= = Port Adelaide experience ( 1998 ) = = =

Following their entry into the AFL in 1997 , Port Adelaide drafted Harley to the club as part of their zone selections , which entitled them to recruit uncontracted players from the South Australian National Football League ( SANFL ) prior to the 1996 National Draft . He struggled to break into the Port Adelaide senior team , and often found himself playing in the SANFL reserves for Norwood during the 1997 season , where he helped the team reach the SANFL reserves Grand Final , where they were defeated by the Port Magpies . Harley 's contributions in the reserves team throughout the year saw him promoted to the senior Norwood side , where he featured in two of their SANFL finals before missing selection for the senior SANFL Grand Final .

Harley continued to ply his trade in the SANFL reserves during the 1998 season , before being rewarded mid @- @ season with a senior team debut for Port Adelaide in round fourteen against Geelong . The team opted to use Harley sparingly off the bench , with Harley 's only meaningful

contribution being a late goal scored with his only kick for the game . Returning to the Norwood reserves team , Harley helped the team reach their second successive Grand Final appearance against the Port Magpies and capture the reserves premiership . However , after struggling to break into the senior side , Harley was traded to Geelong during the off @-@ season for the 37th pick in the 1998 AFL Draft .

= = = Mixed success ( 1999 ? 2006 ) = = =

Harley made his debut for Geelong in round fourteen of the 1999 AFL season against Adelaide , and kept his position in the senior team for the final nine games of the home @-@ and @-@ away campaign . The following season , Harley helped Geelong achieve a 12 @-@ 9 @-@ 1 record to qualify for the finals series . Harley made his finals debut in the First Elimination Final against Hawthorn , where he gathered 7 disposals and took 2 marks in the clubs ' nine @-@ point loss .

His consistency throughout the year , during which he played in all club fixture games for the first time in his career , was rewarded when he won the club 's Most Determined and Dedicated Player Award . Harley made his 50th senior appearance for the club the following season , and again featured in all 22 games over the next two seasons . Despite the club 's inability to qualify for the finals series , Harley 's consistency in the backline was recognised with successive top five placings in the club best and fairest award . During this period Harley was also awarded the Coach 's Award and Best Clubman Award respectively .

= = = Captaining the Cats ( 2007 ? 2009 ) = = =

At the beginning of 2007 , Harley was appointed as club captain of Geelong . Harley 's elevation to the captaincy was considered a surprise move to many outside the club . Despite the reaction , Harley was recommended by the club 's board of directors following a review of the football department the previous year . The club noted that Harley " was a player who would dig deep and stand up when it counts " , and was also chosen to help improve communication links between players , coaching staff and the board of directors .

Harley endured a difficult start to his first season as captain , as he ruptured a finger tendon during the club 's round one loss to the Western Bulldogs . After undergoing surgery on his finger , Harley made his return through the club 's reserves team in the VFL but failed to earn a recall to the senior team until round ten . After playing the majority of his career at Geelong as a centre half back , Harley struggled to find his niche in the defence following the emergence of the younger Matthew Egan in the key position . He soon adjusted himself as a floating defender capable of playing on small forwards , and retained his position in the side after achieving career @-@ best averages of 14 disposals and 5 marks a game . Harley helped the team compile an 18 @-@ 4 win @-@ loss record at the conclusion of the home and away season , earning them their eighth McClelland Trophy and securing first position on the ladder leading into the finals series . Harley led the defence to the number one defensive record in the league during the season , by letting only 1664 points be scored against them . After wins against North Melbourne and Collingwood in the Qualifying and Preliminary finals respectively , Geelong earned a spot in the Grand Final against Harley 's former team Port Adelaide . Collecting 13 disposals and 7 marks , Harley helped the club to an AFL @-@ record 119 point win and secure its first premiership in 44 years . Harley became the first Geelong captain of a premiership @-@ winning side since Fred Wooller in 1963 , and achieved the rare distinction of becoming a premiership @-@ winning captain in his first year at the helm .

Harley 's leadership qualities and influence on the club as captain was commended early on in the season after his handling of teammate Steve Johnson 's off @-@ field discretions . Johnson was banished from the team during the pre @-@ season and demoted to the reserves for the first five games of the season . However , he successfully returned to the team and finished the season as a Norm Smith Medallist and All @-@ Australian . Harley 's leadership influence on the team was reflected in his finishing fourth in the AFLPA Best Captain award during his first year at the helm . He was also awarded life membership of the Geelong Football Club following his 150th team

appearance in the round sixteen win against the Western Bulldogs , and named in the end @-@ of @-@ season South Australian State of Origin team .

Harley 's achievements at the club were recognised prior to the 2008 AFL season when he was inducted into the Geelong Football Club Hall of Fame . Following the success of 2007 , Harley and the club were expected to feature prominently in the 2008 finals series once more . Harley featured in all 22 home @-@ and @-@ away fixture games and 3 finals games . He set career @-@ highs of 14 marks ( round three ) and 14 handpasses ( Preliminary Final ) in the process , and helped the club achieve the number one defensive record during the season for the second consecutive year . During the season , he was also selected to the initial squad for the AFL Hall of Fame all @-@ star game , although he failed to make the final teams . Geelong compiled a 21 ? 1 win @-@ loss record to once again capture the McClelland Trophy and qualify for the finals series in first position on the ladder . After successive wins against St Kilda and the Western Bulldogs , Harley led the team to their second straight Grand Final appearance . During the Grand Final , Harley suffered mild concussion following a collision prior to the half @-@ time break . As a result , he struggled to contribute for the rest of the game as Geelong lost to Hawthorn by 26 points .

Despite the club 's Grand Final defeat , Harley collected a range of individual accolades following his performances throughout the season . He earned his first All @-@ Australian honour and was named as vice @-@ captain of the team . Harley was also recognised by the AFLPA , as he was awarded the AFLPA Best Captain award in just his second season at the helm . After setting career @-@ highs of 209 handballs and 378 disposals during the season , Harley was awarded a career @-@ high seven Brownlow Medal votes during the count and named once again in the South Australian State of Origin team . He was also awarded the Geelong Football Club Best Clubman award for a record third time , and named a co @-@ winner of the club 's Community Champion award alongside teammates James Kelly and David Wojcinski .

Harley was charged with helping the players regroup following the Grand Final loss the previous season , and admitted " losing the grand final was horrific " . Harley missed the first six rounds of the 2009 campaign with a knee injury , before returning to feature in fourteen games for the year . Despite Harley 's injury @-@ riddled campaign , Geelong finished the home @-@ and @-@ away campaign in second place on the ladder with an 18 ? 4 win @-@ loss record . Following the failure of 2008 , Harley suggested that the club had learnt that it needed to " just be the best team in September " and that once qualified for the finals , focus had shifted towards rest and recovery .

After finals wins against the Western Bulldogs and Collingwood , Harley and Geelong progressed through to the Grand Final against St Kilda for a third successive season . During the final , Harley struggled to stay involved in the game and gathered only 5 disposals , 1 mark , and 3 tackles . However , Geelong prevailed by 12 points to win the 2009 AFL premiership and capture its second premiership cup within three seasons .

At the conclusion of the 2009 season , Harley announced his retirement from AFL football . Harley cited his inability to physically meet the demands of AFL football as his reason for departing the game . Harley retired as one of the most successful captains in Geelong 's history : during his three years as captain , Harley led the club to a club @-@ high two premierships ? equalling the accomplishments of Fred Flanagan ? and compiled a 49 @-@ 7 win @-@ loss record . His legacy at the club was pronounced by Thompson as being " one of the great captains in the history of the Geelong Football Club " .

Harley 's achievements during his playing career were recognised when he was nominated for a record four awards during the AFL Player 's Association Madden Medal night : the Madden Medal , the Football Achievement award , the Personal Development award , and the Community Spirit award .

= = After retiring as a player = =

In the weeks following his retirement , Harley was sounded out by the AFL 's newest team , Western Sydney , to join the club in an off @-@ field role . On 4 December 2009 , it was announced that Harley would join the club as a project consultant , serving on committee board and the football

department in a part @-@ time role .

Harley later also joined the AIS @-@ AFL Academy as an assistant coach and mentor . Prior to the 2010 AFL season , it was further announced that Harley would join the Channel 7 network football commentary team , replacing Nathan Buckley in the leading special comments role . Harley admitted that his previous experience as a regular panellist on the football program One Week at a Time during his playing days had fuelled an interest in working within the media industry . He is currently the general manager of football at the Sydney Swans .

= = Player profile = =

During his playing career , Harley was considered as one of the league 's " most respected players " and the " general of the most miserly defence in the league " . Harley began his early career as a key position player at centre half back , where he used his physical size to great effect . However , during his later years he played as a floating defender capable of playing on small forwards . Despite his personal admission to not being " the greatest player " , Harley 's play @-@ reading ability saw him recognised as one of the league 's best at intercepting opposition passes inside his defensive 50m arc .

Harley 's leadership skills have been consistently praised during his time in the league . Despite his reputation for not being the team 's greatest player , he was widely regarded as a natural leader whose character " was the heartbeat of Geelong " . Teammate Gary Ablett complimented Harley as being " very approachable ... [ and ] the key to gelling the team together " . Many commentators have attributed his leadership influence as being a key factor in Geelong 's premiership success . Specifically , he was credited with helping transform the culture of the club , in setting standards for on and off @-@ field behaviour . Harley 's legacy as captain of the club was pronounced by Bill McMaster as being one of the great leaders of Geelong alongside Reg Hickey and Fred Flanagan .

= = Personal life = =

Harley is the second of three children and has two brothers , elder brother Sam and younger brother Ben . He is married to Sydney @-@ based journalist Felicity Harley ( née Percival ) , whom he met while being interviewed for an article in Cosmopolitan .

After starting his Bachelor of Commerce degree at an Adelaide institution in 1996 , Harley transferred to Deakin University and graduated 11 years later in 2007 . Harley was one of 21 players from the Geelong Football Club who witnessed the 2002 Bali bombings first @-@ hand during an off @-@ season holiday to the popular tourist destination . Harley and his team mates were preparing to venture to the Sari night club just moments prior to the terrorist attack .

In 2008 , Harley was named an ambassador for an anti @-@ booze @-@ fuelled violence campaign run by the Geelong Advertiser newspaper , titled " Just Think " . As part of his ambassadorial role , Harley has appeared in numerous advertisements alongside fellow Geelong teammates and ambassadors James Kelly and David Wojcinski . He is an active health ambassador for Barwon Health .

In 2009 , Harley 's position as captain of the Geelong Football Club saw him participate in the inaugural Captains ' Forum . He was selected as one of 24 leaders in Australian sport to discuss and develop a national response at Parliament House , Canberra , for emerging challenges impacting sport and the broader community .

= = Statistics = =

= = Honours and achievements = =

Team

AFL Premiership ( Geelong ) : 2007 ( C ) , 2009 ( C )

McClelland Trophy ( Geelong ) : 2007 ( C ) , 2008 ( C )

SANFL Reserves Premiership ( Norwood ) : 1998

Individual

All @-@ Australian : 2008 ( VC )

AFLPA Best Captain Award : 2008

Captain of Geelong F.C. : 2007 ? 2009

Geelong F.C. Best Clubman Award : 2002 , 2006 , 2008

Geelong F.C. Coach 's Award : 2001

Geelong F.C. Most Determined and Most Dedicated Player Award : 2000

Geelong F.C. Community Champion Award : 2008

South Australian State of Origin representative honours : 2007 , 2008 ( Captain )

Legendary Performers Award : 2009