

= Jeff White ( Australian footballer ) =

Jeffrey Newman " Jeff " White ( born 19 February 1977 ) is an Australian rules footballer who had a distinguished career in the Australian Football League ( AFL ) spanning 14 years . He played most recently and notably for the Melbourne Football Club , following a move from the Fremantle Dockers at the end of 1997 . He was Melbourne 's first @-@ choice ruckman for a decade , relying on his key attributes of athleticism and durability . He was an All @-@ Australian in 2004 , and was selected for Victoria several times . He was an important member of the Melbourne sides which made the 2000 AFL Grand Final and qualified for six finals series from 1998 to 2006 .

White 's career was punctuated by serious injuries to his shin and face , in 2003 and 2005 respectively . He cemented his reputation as one of the premier ruckmen in the AFL with consistent displays for Melbourne during his eleven years at the club . Former team @-@ mate , fellow long @-@ serving Melbourne ruckman , and Melbourne chairman Jim Stynes called White an " ornament to the game and particularly to the Melbourne Football Club . " His contract with Melbourne was not renewed in 2008 and White signed to play in 2009 with the Redland Australian Football Club in the AFL Queensland State League .

= = Personal life = =

White grew up in Victoria and was keen to return to Melbourne after he was drafted to the Fremantle Dockers in Western Australia . He is married to Stacy , and in Melbourne they lived at Sandringham . The pair met on the Gold Coast , and married there in October 2005 . On 5 May 2007 , Stacy gave birth to the couple 's first child , son Kalani Jordan . White has stated his desire to move to the Gold Coast once his playing career in Melbourne is finished , and has mooted that a role with the proposed Gold Coast AFL team is possible in either a development or coaching capacity . In September 2008 , he launched a sports classified website , SponsorThem , which is a specialised networking site for athletes . White wanted to impart his knowledge of social media to other athletes , which grew into his own business , White Echo , launched in 2009 . White is an avid golfer and is a member of the Huntingdale Golf Club , and also plays regularly at the Royal Melbourne Golf Club . He plays off of a handicap of 5 . At his final press @-@ conference with Melbourne , he jokingly stated that a card on the seniors ' Champions Tour was a potential aim once his football career is finished .

= = Playing career = =

White played for the Dandenong Stingrays in the TAC Cup in 1993 and 1994 . He was drafted with the number 1 pick in the 1994 AFL Draft ? the first Dandenong player to be drafted with the highest pick . Travis Johnstone ? who was White 's team @-@ mate at Melbourne for 10 years ? is the only other Dandenong player to be selected with the first pick in an AFL draft . White was one of six Dandenong players selected to play for Vic Metro at the Teal Cup ? the national under 18 championships ? in 1994 . Following his performances for Vic Metro , he was named as an All @-@ Australian at Under 18 level .

= = = Fremantle = = =

White was drafted by the Fremantle Dockers as the number 1 pick , which Fremantle were granted by the AFL because 1995 was the club 's first season in the competition . White made his debut in Round 3 of Fremantle 's inaugural season in a victory over Fitzroy . He played six matches in 1995 , kicking three goals but averaging less than three hit @-@ outs per game . The 1996 season saw him play 13 matches and kick 13 goals and greatly improve his average number of disposals . He was nominated for the AFL Rising Star award in Round 19 in a 24 @-@ point win against Collingwood . He had 22 disposals , 11 marks , kicked a goal and received three Brownlow Medal votes for his stand @-@ out performance for the season . In his final season at Fremantle , White

took on greater responsibility of the ruck @-@ work , and averaged 10 hit @-@ outs per game for the season . He played the first 12 matches of the season , but was then dropped for nine matches until the final match of the season ? and of his Fremantle career . Fremantle 's performances were largely consistent during White 's three seasons with them , as they finished 13th in both 1995 and 1996 , and 12th in 1997 .

White was handed the number 34 guernsey at Fremantle and he wore the number for the rest of his career . He credits Percy Johnson with guiding his ruck style in his time with Fremantle . He played 32 games and kicked 18 goals with the Dockers between 1995 and 1997 , before being traded back to his home state of Victoria to play for Melbourne . Salary @-@ cap breaches involved in White 's trade caused Melbourne to forfeit their highest selection ( pick number 5 ) in the 1999 draft to Fremantle .

= = = Melbourne = = =

= = = = Early seasons = = = =

Melbourne traded their two highest selections in the 1997 draft ( picks 2 and 18 ) to Fremantle in return for White . He was a key signing in Melbourne 's attempt to rebuild its squad , and in his first season at Melbourne he shared the rucking duties with Jim Stynes , the latter mentoring White in their only season together . He played in all of Melbourne 's 25 matches for the season as they reached the preliminary final , where they lost to North Melbourne . He received 11 votes in the Brownlow Medal for the season . After a promising start to his career in Melbourne , 1999 was less successful . White 's disposals and scoring statistics dropped significantly , and he tellingly failed to record any votes in the Brownlow Medal . In 2000 , he was a key member of the Melbourne side that reached the Grand Final , with many pundits seeing White as the best Melbourne player on the ground in the loss to Essendon , as he had 24 hit @-@ outs and 14 disposals . He kicked 16 goals and averaged 21 hit @-@ outs per game for the season , and as in 1998 , he recorded 11 Brownlow Medal votes . He effected the most number of hit @-@ outs in the league for the season , with 499 .

White played all but one of Melbourne 's matches in 2001 , and after a commanding performance against his former club in Round 21 where had 33 possessions , kicked two goals , and received three Brownlow Medal votes , then @-@ Fremantle coach Ben Allan responded to a suggestion that White may leave Melbourne at the end of the season by saying " we 'll have him back " . White recorded the most hit @-@ outs in the league in 2002 , with 561 , playing in all of Melbourne 's matches in a run that saw them narrowly lose to Adelaide by two goals in a semi @-@ final . The 2003 season was disappointing for both Melbourne , and White personally . His average number of hit @-@ outs dropped by more than six per game , he averaged fewer than eight kicks per match , and did not receive any Brownlow Medal votes .

= = = = Consistent form = = = =

The following season saw a vast improvement in White 's personal performance , as he enjoyed the finest season of his career , winning Melbourne 's best @-@ and @-@ fairest , receiving All @-@ Australian selection , and ranking second in the league for total number of hit @-@ outs . He reached the top ten in the 2004 Brownlow Medal with 15 votes , including four best @-@ on @-@ ground displays , with dominant performances against North Melbourne and Fremantle among them . His most productive period came between Rounds 9 and 16 , where he recorded three best @-@ on @-@ ground displays , averaged 25 hit @-@ outs and received 13 Brownlow Medal votes . His Round 6 performance against Carlton is also noted as one of his career @-@ best performances , with Melbourne winning by more than 100 points , as White recorded 26 disposals , took eight marks , kicked one goal , and received the three Brownlow votes for his influential display . Coinciding with White 's career @-@ best form , Melbourne sat atop the AFL ladder after Round 18 , but in the final month of the season , the team lost its last five matches , finishing fifth after Round 22 , and losing

to Essendon in the Elimination Final . The 2005 season was less successful for both White and Melbourne , with the club struggling to cement a place in the top eight during the year , although they managed to finish seventh after a strong finish to the minor round , and qualify for the club 's second consecutive finals series ? the first time it had competed in consecutive finals series since 1991 . Melbourne again lost in the Elimination Final , this time to Geelong . It was during this match that White sustained his career @-@ threatening facial injury .

Following the 2005 season , he signed a three @-@ year deal with Melbourne ? his last contract with the club ? worth A \$ 1.4m. He was an integral part of Melbourne 's strong 2006 form , as the team won 11 out of 12 games after losing the first three matches of the season . He was named among the best Melbourne players in the side 's come @-@ from @-@ behind victory against St Kilda in the Elimination Final . Melbourne lost to Fremantle the following week , ending their third consecutive finals series . During 2006 , White effected fewer hit @-@ outs than in 2005 , although his total number of disposals , marks and goals were all significantly improved . He played all of Melbourne 's matches that season , as he did for four seasons from 2004 ? a consistent run which saw him play more than 100 consecutive matches after he missed games in 2003 due to a serious shin injury and a knee injury , until Round 12 , 2008 . In both 2005 and 2006 , he ranked third in the league in number of hit @-@ outs .

= = = Final years = = =

Melbourne 's poor form throughout the 2007 season , when they won just five matches , saw the side finish 14th . White brought up his milestone 250th AFL @-@ game in Round 19 with a win over the Western Bulldogs . His last season with Melbourne was 2008 , in which he was dropped for the first time in his Melbourne career , despite returning to some of his best form . His average number of disposals per match ( 18 @-@ 5 ) was the highest of any season in his career . His long @-@ time understudy Mark Jamar assumed White 's position as the premier ruckman at Melbourne , allowing Paul Johnson to play the second @-@ ruckman role . It was the first time in 20 years that anyone other than White or Jim Stynes had been the first @-@ choice ruckman at Melbourne for an extended run of matches . Coach Dean Bailey said that 2008 was the most difficult season that White and team @-@ mate Adem Yze had experienced at the club ? the side finished bottom and won just three games . Bailey praised both White and Yze on their professionalism and attitude at the end of the season ? the pair 's last at Melbourne . White played 15 games in 2008 ? his lowest total in a season with Melbourne . He finished his career at Melbourne in Round 22 against Richmond , kicking two goals and having 17 possessions . He received 53 Brownlow votes throughout his career ? 47 with Melbourne and six with Fremantle . He reached double @-@ figures in Brownlow votes on three occasions , with his highest being the 15 votes he received in 2004 . He received his final Brownlow vote in Round 7 , 2008 , in Melbourne 's win over Fremantle . He received Brownlow votes in nine of his 14 AFL seasons .

He was named as one of Melbourne 's 150 Legends during the club 's 150th anniversary celebrations , and finished his career with the seventh @-@ highest number of appearances for Melbourne with 236 . He was made a life member of the Melbourne Football Club during 2008 . White was delisted from Melbourne following the 2008 season , but has stated that he hopes to play on for one or two more seasons at another AFL club : " From a personal point of view , I still feel like I 've got some time left . " His preference would have been to continue at Melbourne , saying , " I love the club and would love to play on " but that he " totally understands " his delisting . Dean Bailey spoke highly of White 's leadership at Melbourne , saying that White will leave a lasting legacy at the club .

= = = Season 2009 = = =

Carlton coach Brett Ratten suggested that he would " have to go back and have a look " at the possibility of drafting White for the 2009 season . Ratten cited White 's experience and leadership in helping to guide the younger ruckmen at Carlton as a potential draw @-@ card . St Kilda was also

suggested as a possible destination for White to continue his playing career , but the Sydney Swans later emerged as the most likely destination for White . Ultimately White signed to play in 2009 with the Redland Australian Football Club in the AFL Queensland State League . After one season with Redlands he retired from playing and joined Gold Coast Football Club as a coach

= = = Victoria = = =

During 1998 ? his first year living back in Melbourne ? he was selected to play for Victoria . He was selected in the squad of 25 for Victoria in 1999 but did not make the final 22 for the match against South Australia . This was the last State @-@ of @-@ Origin match , although a Victoria team was selected to play against a Dream Team in the AFL Hall of Fame Tribute Match in 2008 ? White was selected in the initial 40 @-@ man squad for Victoria , but once again did not make the final 22 . He was Melbourne 's only representative in the squad . Playing for Victoria in 1998 was his only representative appearance .

= = Playing style = =

White 's kicking accuracy was of particular note for a ruckman ? his goal @-@ kicking accuracy finished at slightly less than 60 % . He was a consistent exponent of the spectacular mark , preferring to take chest marks high over packs . He was nominated on several occasions for the Mark of the Year , but he never won the award . His ball @-@ skills and work around the ground remained one of his greatest strengths throughout his career . He effected 5000 hit @-@ outs in his AFL career , the most by any one player since records began in 1987 , with a career @-@ high game total of 47 during a resounding round @-@ 22 win over West Coast Eagles in 2000 . Testament to his durability and consistency , he was ranked in the top five in the AFL in total number of hit @-@ outs for nine consecutive seasons from 1999 . At 195 cm , White is relatively short for a ruckman , and operated more as a ruck @-@ rover than as a traditional ruckman . He was noted for his athleticism and vertical @-@ leap , which helped him overcome his lack of height in comparison to other ruckmen . His approach to ruck @-@ work ? with greater emphasis on possessing the ball and working around the ground ? helped him adapt to the changed centre @-@ circle rules , and compensated for his lack of height and diminished ability at stoppages . Following the departure of Jim Stynes from Melbourne , White later worked on his game with former ruckman Sam Newman . Percy Johnson , Stynes and finally Newman guided and influenced White 's ruck @-@ work during his career .

= = Injuries = =

Throughout the latter stages of his career , he wore special thigh- and shin @-@ pads to protect himself from injury in the ruck ? his specially @-@ designed shin @-@ pad was required to protect a problematic shin injury which had threatened his career . During a match in 2003 , he was kicked in the shin , causing his shin @-@ pad to crack and split the skin , leaving a laceration about the size of a tablespoon . Once the wound had healed , White 's surgeon told him that if it split open again , he would have to stop playing . White has said that this " reality check " helped to strengthen his focus and helped him deal with injuries more effectively . He said that the specially @-@ designed shin @-@ guard and those who designed it " saved his career " . ( The shin @-@ guard can be seen on White 's right @-@ leg in the photos on this page . )

In 2005 , he was involved in a horrific on @-@ field incident with Geelong 's Steven King . As King attempted to kick the ball out of mid @-@ air , he missed and collected White 's face at the height of his leg 's swing , causing facial injuries that required extensive surgery , inserting five metal plates and 14 screws into White 's jaw and face . It was viewed as an accident by the AFL tribunal and no action was taken against King . As the incident took place in Melbourne 's final match of the season ? Geelong winning the match and knocking Melbourne out of the finals ? White was able to recover during the off @-@ season and did not miss a match , despite the severity of the injury . White 's

wedding to his fiancée Stacy was postponed until later in the year due to the injury .

= = Statistics = =