

Scott Watters as the new messiah and dreams of old messiahs.

There's a new boy in St.Kilda town (sans Moorabbin, sans Seaford) and his name is Scott Watters. For the last two years he has ably assisted Mick Malthouse (and beaten St.Kilda) so at least he has some experience of us. Albeit from the other side. Reading the online ABC news, Watters is 42 (a babe as is the current trend in selecting young, untried AFL coaches). He has been the Magpies defensive coach, and has previously coached WAFL club Subiaco, to two premierships in three years. We will take that please. He played 109 AFL games for West Coast, Sydney and Fremantle from 1989 to 1996.

Won't 2012 be an interesting year. New coaches for Collingwood, Western Bulldogs, Melbourne, St.Kilda and Fremantle and Adelaide, all younger guns (other than Rossy Lyon) looking to make their mark. Ross Lyon is looking for some success, but so are 17 other teams.

The swap meet which is trade week is all over bar some last minute secret football business that has to wind up tomorrow. The good news for Saints supporters is that we have two young, fast forwards who seem to love doing the Milney and grabbing the ball and slotting it through. I've watched the u-tube moments captured of Ahmed Saad and Terry Milera and I'm impressed and eagerly awaiting some fresh blood both in the team and in the coaching box. I hope Robert Harvey stays, because I think by the next time the coach merry-go-round comes, he'll be in a better position to be considered for the top job.

Now we await the draft. I've never taken such an active interest in the football goings on. Writing for this site every week for the last year and a bit has left me hungry for amateur football journalism and I am keeping a good ear of SEN and on the comings and goings as reported. I am also working towards a football exhibition in March where I put all my cartoons and paintings of football in one spot just before the season begins. So football is not over for this tragic, as the colours and movement are still being processed with paint and with words. It's a hoot that I'm having.

And I have just read about one of our superstar players and coach, Darryl Baldock. This year he passed away, and the book is both a tribute and a history lesson in St.Kilda and it's one triumphant moment and the time that has followed since. The book was written while he was still alive and is on sale at Moorabbin Locker. I started following St.Kilda when Baldock played his last two years and remember him as a player and getting his autograph as a 12 year old.

Reading the book brings back the memories of just how good he was, both as a footballer but as a man. When I think about the 1966 Grand Final, and read the take on it in this book by Tasmanian journalist and friend of Darryl Baldock, Peter Lyons, I yearn to see him again on the DVD of that wonderful game. You have to understand that St.Kilda supporters have had to live on this one occasion, and will have to continue to live on it for some time to come, unless Matters is the new Mr Incredible as Baldock was our forever, Mr Magic.

Reading about THAT Grand Final, so much rode on the back of this one smaller than usual half-forward position player. The book ends each chapter with a snippet from the book naming Darryl as the first Club Legend, and it was a leather bound volume containing some 80 tributes from a cross section of "football enthusiasts". There were only two copies ever printed. One was given to the "Doc" and the other bought for \$10,000 via an Auction at St.Kilda. One lucky

collector has that volume. Many of the contributors to this book either played with Baldock or against him and all stories are telling. No-one had ever played with or played against such a star. The unanimous vote was no one handled the ball, with either hand, with such deftness and skill and, well, just plain magic, that Baldock did. And I loved the part of how he became so skilled, he would think and play with that ball at every opportunity from a young age, so that he was always testing and trying out something different. And it paid off. That old adage, practice makes perfect comes to mind. It is what he did.

So my wanderings about Darryl Baldock come to this. The 1966 Grand Final would not have been won without his herculean effort, through an injured knee, through being battered by opposition Collingwood players as was done in the day before so many umpires and many TV shots and evidence, and he inspired and lifted that particular good team to be Premiers. If it hadn't been for him, we would not have that one.

Perhaps gone are the days where one player lifts and takes the whole team with him, but sometimes I think not. When I think back to this years Grand Final, the one player who stepped up and provided something more was young Tom Hawkins, who changed his game and became the force that helped the Cats to another win. If I go back over Grand Final efforts, even though it's always the team that puts it all together, it often takes one giant leap from one individual to change the way the game is played on the day.

St.Kilda have not had that out of the world player in any of the other Grand Final attempts that have managed to push everyone else along with them and grab the damn cup. Brendon Goddard and Lenny Hayes almost did it. Because that's what it takes, it has to be taken, rather than won. Darryl Baldock helped us to grab it in 1966, and we have to live off that one for awhile more.

Meanwhile, the footy machinations continue off season. "Moving forward" is still the buzz phrase. Snippets of Watters press conference now can be included. He feels we have core leaders and good kids, and we need to blend them together. He has expectations on and off the field. He is setting high benchmarks. He feels he has the opportunity to maximize the list and playing group and feels that there is room of development across the whole list. He admires the defensive DNA of the Saints and it will be in the forefront of future game plans. He believes we can continue to evolve over the next two or three years, he will take some of what is great and add to it. Watters looks in the eyes of the Saints players and sees the drive, commitment and motivation and feels that the group is ready for change. He thinks the group is ready to accept a challenge, be it to culture or on the field.

He sounds confident and determined and that's what we need. Someone with fresh eyes. Someone who wants the champions like Robert Harvey to stay and keep the engine running. Go Watters. Go Saints. Let's have some marching in, in 2012 and beyond.

Yvette Wroby
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