

# HOPES FOR HORE


**ANDREW PALOCZI**

FORMER Leitchville-Gunbower player, Marty Hore, is tipped to make his AFL debut for Melbourne in the early stages of the 2019 season.

He could be selected as early as this week for a backline role for the opening round game at the MCG against Port Adelaide on Saturday.

Selections had not been announced when this issue was published, but injuries to defenders have him in contention for selection. The 2018 draftee has recovered well after ankle surgery, working hard on the track during the pre-season, after being on a modified program in the lead up to Christmas.

Starting out at Leitchville-Gunbower in the under 11s, Hore progressed to the seniors at the age of 17.

He described the importance of his season of senior football with the club.

"It was probably a good learning experience. Playing against men you get used to the harder hits and it probably helped me when I came down and played VFL against more mature bodies," he said.

His time in the VFL amounted to three years and was spent with Collingwood, where he twice won the club's VFL best and fairest as well as being named in the back pocket of the VFL Team of the Year in both 2017 and 2018.

As well as enabling him to catch the eye of Demons' recruiters, his time in the VFL exposed him to AFL surroundings.

"It's held me in good stead, coming into the elite environment. The facilities and all the coaching expertise at Collingwood, that

helped me a fair bit with my footy and, yeah, I progressed. I think that puts me in a good position," Hore said.

Still, he doesn't believe it will be easy to break into Melbourne's backline, given the healthy state of the Demons' list and the number of good defenders at selectors' disposal.

It was when he moved from Leitchville-Gunbower to Bendigo Pioneers in the then TAC Cup that Hore was shifted to defence, having previously played as a forward.

"I've always been a pretty good kick and so they (Pioneers) wanted to use that out of the backline I think," he said of the transition.

Hore considers his time as a forward has been advantageous in knowing how to play as a backman, and believes one of his strengths is his ability to watch the ball, but also maintaining an awareness of where his opponent is.

Whilst Hore is able to get back to the Leitchville dairy farm of parents Steven and Deanne a fair bit during the off season, he doesn't anticipate having many opportunities to do so now the season has arrived.

Unlike many players who go straight from the under-18s onto an AFL list, 23-year-old Hore has had the opportunity to broaden his horizons away from football.

Prior to and during his time in the VFL system, he worked as a cabinet maker.

Although Hore said it could be tough having to front up to work sore or tired from footy, he indicated it could also be a release and a break from footy.

Melbourne's season commences tomorrow at the MCG, with the Demons doing battle with Port Adelaide.



Marty Hore is preparing for AFL. Picture — MELBOURNE FOOTBALL CLUB



David McLeish accepted the honour in Sydney with Swans chief executive officer, Tom Harley, left, and chairman Andrew Pridham. Picture — SYDNEY SWANS FOOTBALL CLUB

## Fame for local former Swan

**JENNY DENTON**

IT WAS "right on 50 years ago" that David McLeish was approached by recruiters from South Melbourne, who invited him to play a game in the reserves.

Earlier this month he was inducted into the Sydney Swans Hall of Fame in recognition of a career that saw him play more than 200 games for the former South Melbourne club, and another 200 for Kerang and Wodonga.

McLeish, who started out in the Kerang Under 18s as a 14-year-old and went into the seniors at 17, won the best and fairest award at the club in 1968.

The kid from Kerang started the 1969 season at home with no idea he was about to hit the big time.

A few games into the season the initial approach came and he made a couple of trips to play in Melbourne before being officially recruited.

Zoning rules at the time meant that all players from this district were being channelled to the Swans.

McLeish didn't start out a fan of the team but was happy to play for them under their new coach.

"I barracked for Melbourne, but Norm Smith came over to the Swans that year and brought all these other people from the club with him," he said.

A few years later the system had changed, and McLeish's brother-in-law, Mario Bortolotto, who was first sent to Geelong, wound up at Carlton, where he played in two premierships.

The circumstances around McLeish's debut for the Swans seniors are the stuff of legend at the club and were remembered at the awards night.

When Smith asked him to take to the field with only 10 minutes left to play, McLeish

struggled to get his tracksuit pants off over his boots, and the coach jumped up to help him.

"He banged his head and nearly knocked himself out trying to get my tracksuit pants off, which was quite funny, in retrospect," McLeish said.

The talented teenager, who would become known as "the ultimate team player", started out on the wing, and was later moved to half back flank.

In one of his first games with the Swans he was played against Richmond's Dick Clay.

"It was a huge surprise. I thought he was a Superman. As a country boy you're watching these superstars in awe, and then suddenly you're playing against them."

The Swans moved McLeish into the George Hotel, opposite the South Melbourne market, where he was joined by Steven Hoffman from Pyramid Hill, Reg Gleeson from Lockhart, Neville Miller from Wagga and Ricky Quade, another New South Welshman.

"There were five of us staying in the George Hotel for four years. I came halfway through '69, the rest came in 1970. We were all at South Melbourne. They called us the George boys," McLeish said.

At the time the young player was working for Goodyear Tyre Service, which had transferred his job from Kerang to South Melbourne.

In those days all the players had full-time jobs, he said, with Smith threatening to sack them if they didn't.

The team trained two days a week and played on Saturdays.

"There wasn't any gym. We did a lot of running and circle work," McLeish said.

He was earning \$35 a game, which was equivalent to the average wage, and was pretty impressed with it.

"You'd get four weeks pay in cash in an envelope. I thought, 'This is pretty good!'"

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David McLeish featured on a Scanlens bubble gum football card during the 1970s.