



MCC LIBRARY FACT SHEET

SEPTEMBER 27, 2025

AFL 2025 GRAND FINAL

GEELONG V BRISBANE



GEELONG AND THE BRISBANE LIONS IN GRAND FINALS

Today's game will be the first time that Geelong and the Brisbane Lions have met in a grand final. Overall, since becoming a founder member of the Victorian Football League (VFL) in 1897, Geelong has played in 19 VFL/AFL grand finals, winning ten and losing nine. [The VFL became the Australian Football League (AFL) in 1990.] Since their establishment in 1997, following the merger of Fitzroy and the Brisbane Bears, the Brisbane Lions have contested six grand finals, winning four and losing two. The Brisbane Bears did not make a grand final during their ten years in the VFL/AFL (1987-96). Fitzroy, a foundation club of the VFL, played in 13 grand finals between 1898 and 1944, winning eight and losing five, but did not make a grand final in their last 52 years in the VFL/AFL (1945-96).

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

The pre-grand final edition of the 1925 *Football Record* previewed the match between Geelong and Collingwood:

"A victory today for Geelong will take the premiership to the seaside city for the first time in the history of the League, but if they are beaten they will be runners-up for the second time. The first occasion was in 1897. Whether Geelong win or are beaten it must be conceded that football has never been so great a part of the life of the townspeople of their fair city as it has been this season. There has been a lot of credit given - and deservedly so, too - to both Geelong and Melbourne for the wonderfully fine ball (sic) both have played this season, and a fortnight ago one heard on all sides opinions that it would be a great thing for the game if either of those sides pulled off the premiership this season. Melbourne have missed it, Geelong's big chance is ahead of them now."

For the record, the result of the grand final was a win to Geelong **10.19 (79)** to Collingwood **9.15 (69)**.

The same *Record* also told us:

"After the match last week a man with a cockatoo on his arm walked into the Collingwood room, and exhibiting the parrot proudly as a representative from Birdland, wished the Birds of Collingwood further success. The cockatoo seemed perfectly at his ease among so many magpies."

We do feel that the following comments in the *Record* regarding an umpire and the players would be unlikely to be reported nowadays:

"Jack McMurray carried out his duties as field umpire of the two semi-finals in a manner that deserves praise. The little chap was cheered at the half-time interval and at the conclusion of the match. His job was made easier than it might have been by the splendid spirit in which the players played the game. Melbourne were given 51 and Geelong 53 free kicks, according to the record kept by my friend, Mr. Watson, of the Melbourne club, as fair and impartial club man as has been associated with the Fuchsias. It's a pleasure to sit alongside him and Mr. Wal Spry, the Melbourne timekeeper, who has watched the clock as Melbourne's timekeeper for nearly 40 years."

GEELONG'S GRAND FINALS (Premierships in bold)

1925 – Geelong 10.19 (79) defeated Collingwood 9.15 (69) at the MCG; Crowd 64,288

1930 – Collingwood 14.16 (100) defeated Geelong 9.16 (70) at the MCG; Crowd 45,022

1931 – Geelong 9.14 (68) defeated Richmond 7.6 (48) at the MCG; Crowd 60,712

1937 – Geelong 18.14 (122) defeated Collingwood 12.18 (90) at the MCG; Crowd 88,540
1951 – Geelong 11.15 (81) defeated Essendon 10.10 (70) at the MCG; Crowd 84,109
1952 – Geelong 13.8 (86) defeated Collingwood 5.10 (40) at the MCG; Crowd 81,304
1953 – Collingwood 11.11 (77) defeated Geelong 8.17 (65) at the MCG; Crowd 89,149
1963 – Geelong 15.19 (109) defeated Hawthorn 8.12 (60) at the MCG; Crowd 101,209
1967 – Richmond 16.18 (114) defeated Geelong 15.15 (105) at the MCG; Crowd 109,396
1989 – Hawthorn 21.18 (144) defeated Geelong 21.12 (138) at the MCG; Crowd 94,796
1992 – West Coast 16.17 (113) defeated Geelong 12.13 (85) at the MCG; Crowd 95,007
1994 – West Coast 20.23 (143) defeated Geelong 8.15 (63) at the MCG; Crowd 93,860
1995 – Carlton 21.15 (141) defeated Geelong 11.14 (80) at the MCG; Crowd 93,670
2007 – Geelong 24.19 (163) defeated Port Adelaide 6.8 (44) at the MCG; Crowd 97,302
2008 – Hawthorn 18.7 (115) defeated Geelong 11.23 (89) at the MCG; Crowd 100,012
2009 – Geelong 12.8 (80) defeated St Kilda 9.14 (68) at the MCG; Crowd 99,251
2011 – Geelong 18.11 (119) defeated Collingwood 12.9 (81) at the MCG; Crowd 99,537
2020 – Richmond 12.9 (81) defeated Geelong 7.8 (50) at the Gabba; Crowd 29,707
2022 – Geelong 20.13 (133) defeated Sydney 8.4 (52) at the MCG; Crowd 100,024
(Note: Geelong also finished runners-up to Essendon in the inaugural VFL season in 1897, when a round-robin series of finals decided the premiership and no grand final was played).

BRISBANE LIONS’ GRAND FINALS

2001 – Brisbane 15.18 (108) defeated Essendon 12.10 (82) at the MCG; Crowd 91,482
2002 – Brisbane 10.15 (75) defeated Collingwood 9.12 (66) at the MCG; Crowd 91,817
2003 – Brisbane 20.14 (134) defeated Collingwood 12.12 (84) at the MCG; Crowd 79,451
2004 – Port Adelaide 17.11 (113) defeated Brisbane 10.13 (73) at the MCG; Crowd 77,671
2023 – Collingwood 12.18 (90) defeated Brisbane 13.8 (86) at the MCG; Crowd 100,024
2024 – Brisbane 18.12 (120) defeated Sydney 9.6 (60) at the MCG; Crowd 100,013

FITZROY’S GRAND FINALS

1898 – Fitzroy 5.8 (38) defeated Essendon 3.5 (23) at the Junction Oval; Crowd 16,538
1899 – Fitzroy 3.9 (27) defeated South Melbourne 3.8 (26) at the Junction Oval; Crowd 4,823
1900 – Melbourne 4.10 (34) defeated Fitzroy 3.12 (30) at the East Melbourne Cricket Ground; Crowd 20,181
1903 – Collingwood 4.7 (31) defeated Fitzroy 3.11 (29) at the MCG; Crowd 32,263
1904 – Fitzroy 9.7 (61) defeated Carlton 5.7 (37) at the MCG; Crowd 32,688
1905 – Fitzroy 4.6 (30) defeated Collingwood 2.5 (17) at the MCG; Crowd 30,000
1906 – Carlton 15.4 (94) defeated Fitzroy 6.9 (45) at the MCG; Crowd 44,437
1913 – Fitzroy 7.14 (56) defeated St Kilda 5.13 (43) at the MCG; Crowd 59,556
1916 – Fitzroy 12.13 (85) defeated Carlton 8.8 (56) at the MCG; Crowd 21,130
1917 – Collingwood 9.20 (74) defeated Fitzroy 5.9 (39) at the MCG; Crowd 28,512
1922 – Fitzroy 11.13 (79) defeated Collingwood 9.14 (68) at the MCG; Crowd 50,064
1923 – Essendon 8.15 (63) defeated Fitzroy 6.10 (46) at the MCG; Crowd 46,566
1944 – Fitzroy 9.12 (66) defeated Richmond 7.9 (51) at the Junction Oval; Crowd 43,000

GEELONG AND THE BRISBANE LIONS IN FINALS

These teams have contested five finals before today. All their finals were preliminary finals before they met in this year’s second qualifying final.

2004 Second Preliminary Final at the MCG Brisbane 12.12 (84) defeated Geelong 10.15 (75); Crowd: 55,768
2020 Second Preliminary Final at the Gabba Geelong 11.16 (82) defeated Brisbane 6.6 (42); Crowd: 29,121
2022 First Preliminary Final at the MCG Geelong 18.12 (120) defeated Brisbane 7.7 (49); Crowd: 77,677
2024 Second Preliminary Final at the MCG Brisbane 14.11 (95) defeated Geelong 12.13 (85); Crowd: 93,066
2025 Second Qualifying Final at the MCG Geelong 16.16 (112) defeated Brisbane 11.8 (74); Crowd 86,364

GEELONG AND FITZROY IN FINALS

Geelong and the Brisbane Bears never met in a final. Geelong and Fitzroy met twice in finals, with the most recent meeting being more than a century ago.

1903 First Semi Final at the MCG

Fitzroy 11.15 (81) defeated Geelong 4.5 (29); Crowd 15,000

1923 First Semi Final at the MCG

Fitzroy 14.13 (97) defeated Geelong 8.14 (62); Crowd 56,240

GEELONG VERSUS FITZROY/BRISBANE BEARS/BRISBANE LIONS

Geelong v Fitzroy (1897-1996) – Played 183; Geelong 103; Fitzroy 79; Drawn 1

Geelong v Brisbane Bears (1987-96) – Played 15; Geelong 10; Bears 4; Drawn 1

Geelong v Brisbane Lions (1997-2025) – Played 46; Geelong 26; Lions 20

PLAYED FOR BOTH

Originally from Tasmania, **Adrian Fletcher** was drafted by Geelong in 1988 and played 23 games (10 goals) for the Cats from 1989 to 1991. He then moved to St Kilda for one season (1992), playing 22 games (10 goals). Due to a contractual dispute he left St Kilda and moved to Brisbane, playing 86 games (49 goals) for the Bears from 1993 to 1996 and a further 21 games (4 goals) for the Lions in their inaugural season (1997). Brisbane then traded him to Fremantle, where he played 79 games (24 goals) from 1998 to 2001, winning the club's best and fairest award in 1999, and being co-captain in 2000 and 2001. After retiring as an AFL player, Fletcher played with VFL club Williamstown (2002-03) and was also a development coach at Collingwood (then Williamstown's AFL affiliate). He was an assistant coach at Geelong in 2004 before returning to Collingwood as an assistant coach for three years (2005-07). He was then an assistant coach at the Brisbane Lions for six years (2008-13). His son **Jaspa Fletcher** was drafted by the Brisbane Lions under the father-son rule in 2022 and made his debut for the Lions in Round 14, 2023. He has now played 67 games for the Lions, being a member of their 2023 losing grand final team and their 2024 premiership team.

Recruited from North Geelong, **Andrew Bews** made his AFL debut for Geelong in Round 4 of the 1982 VFL season against St Kilda at the Moorabbin Oval. A rover and back pocket, he went on to play 207 games for the Cats from 1982 to 1993, kicking 132 goals. He was Geelong captain in 1990 and 1991, and represented Victoria 12 times, winning the Simpson Medal in 1987 as best player on the ground against Western Australia in Perth. He earned All-Australian selection in the same year. Bews moved to Brisbane in 1994, where he played 56 games (2 goals) for the Bears from 1994 to 1996, and 19 games for the Lions in 1997 and 1998. His son, **Jed Bews**, is a current player for Geelong, being drafted in the 2011 AFL Draft under the father-son rule. He was a member of the Cats' 2022 premiership side. He has battled injury in recent seasons.

Damian Bourke was captain of Geelong from 1987 to 1989, his last game as captain being the Cats' narrow 1989 grand final loss to Hawthorn. Recruited from St Joseph's, he had made his debut for Geelong in Round 16, 1983, against Melbourne at the MCG. He went on to play 102 games as a ruckman for the Cats, kicking 15 goals. He finished equal eighth in the Brownlow Medal in 1991, won by Melbourne's Jim Stynes. Bourke moved to Brisbane in 1993 and played 22 games (4 goals) for the Bears from 1993 to 1995. His son, **Jordon Bourke**, played six games for the Brisbane Lions in 2014 and 2015.

Lincoln McCarthy came to Geelong from Glenelg, being picked up at pick 66 in the 2011 National Draft, making his debut in Round 10, 2012 against Greater Western Sydney. Injury saw him miss the entire 2013 season, play just four games in 2014, none in 2015, and just 24 games in the next three seasons. At the end of the 2018 season, he was traded to Brisbane where he has played a total of 122 games, but again injury saw him play only eight games in 2024. A recurrence of an ACL injury in pre-season practice this year has again seen him miss the entire season. McCarthy was keen to make a comeback in the VFL in August with a view to possibly being available for the finals, but it was eventually decided not to risk further injury and to undergo further rehabilitation with a view to a return in 2026. McCarthy played 29 games (25 goals) for the Cats and so far has played 122 games (142 goals) for the Lions.

QUESTIONS

THE MONSTER 2025 AFL GRAND FINAL QUIZ: "OVER TO YOU"

1. In which year did the record crowd of 121,696 attend the grand final?
2. Name the VFL/AFL clubs who have never won a premiership.
3. Who was a premiership player with Brisbane in 2001 and 2002, and a premiership coach with Geelong in 2011 and 2022?
4. Which three clubs have the highest number of AFL/VFL premierships?
5. Name the seven venues used for grand finals besides the MCG.
6. Which player has the most grand final appearances and the most premierships?
7. The Norm Smith Medal is awarded to the best player afield in the VFL/AFL grand final. It was first awarded in 1979 and presented by whom?
8. In which season was a premiership cup first presented to the victorious captain on the day of the grand final?
9. Who was the first player to play 300 games, kick 100 goals in a season and win the Brownlow Medal?
10. Who was the last premiership captain-coach?
11. Which club won seven flags before 1923?
12. When was the grand final televised live in its entirety for the first time in Melbourne?
13. Name the three clubs that have lost three consecutive grand finals.
14. Who is the premiership player with the fewest career matches?
15. Who is the youngest player to appear in a premiership side?
16. Who was the oldest player to appear in a premiership side?
17. In the 2011 grand final the first four goals were kicked by players named Travis. Can you name them?
18. Name the clubs that have won three or more premierships in a row.
19. Who was the captain of Geelong's 1963 premiership side?
20. When was the first VFL grand final played?
21. Who am I? I am a 204cm (6ft 8in) ruckman. I came from South Barwon (GFL). I played with Geelong in 2019-21 (8 games, 6 goals) and Brisbane from 2022 to the present (48 games, 15 goals). I was a Brisbane 2024 premiership player.
22. When was the first grand final played at the MCG?
23. Which team won the first VFL premiership in 1897?
24. Who is the only man to captain grand finals teams for two clubs?
25. Who were the twin brothers who played for both Geelong and Collingwood, and were members of Collingwood's 1902 and 1903 premiership teams?
26. Who was the last umpire to control a VFL grand final alone?
27. In which year were premiership medallions presented to players immediately after the grand final for the first time?
28. Which club finished last in 1916 yet won the flag?
29. What did Cliff Rankin, Charlie Clymo and Chris Scott all achieve in their first season as Geelong coach?
30. When was the first VFL grand final in which player numbers were used?
31. In which state did Brisbane coach Chris Fagan play all his senior football?
32. Who am I? I played in 31 finals and kicked 111 goals. In ten grand finals I kicked 35 goals.
33. Which teams did Brisbane defeat to win their premierships in 2001, 2002 and 2003?
34. Can you name the year? Richmond won the premiership; Hawthorn played their last game at Glenferrie Oval; and Gala Supreme won the Melbourne Cup.
35. In which years did Mark Thompson coach Geelong to a premiership?
36. There are two cases of brothers playing on opposing sides in a grand final. Who were they and in which years did this happen?
37. What has been the greatest winning margin in a grand final?
38. How many premierships did Norm Smith win as a player and coach with Melbourne?
39. Which club scored 2.13 (25) to win a grand final during the 1920s?
40. Which Collingwood player won the Stawell Gift in 1924?

Answers on last page

★★ **BROWNLOW MEDAL**

Congratulations go to Matt Rowell of the Gold Coast Suns, who won the 2025 Brownlow Medal with 39 votes, including setting a record with three votes in each of his first four games this season. Rowell went on to be voted best on ground in eight games. His overall tally is the second highest in the Medal's history, with Patrick Cripps of Carlton winning with 45 votes in 2024.

As well as scoring his first All Australian jacket in 2025, Rowell also played a leading role in the Suns' first ever finals appearances in their 15-year history.

The only other Gold Coast Suns player to win the Brownlow to date is Gary Ablett Jnr, who won at Geelong in 2009 and Gold Coast in 2013. The only other No. 1 draft pick and Brownlow winner is Adam Cooney of the Western Bulldogs, who triumphed in 2008.



MATT ROWELL

In 2024, Matt Rowell achieved 25 votes – including three votes in six games - to lead the way on the Gold Coast Suns' tally. In 2025, the first draft pick from 2019 added another fourteen votes to take out the Brownlow.

Rowell, who started out with the Canterbury Cobras, then made his way to Carey Grammar, before being recruited from Oakleigh U18s, is acknowledged as one of the strongest onballers in the AFL, finishing second for clearances in 2025, as well as third in tackles and third in contested possessions.

In a special achievement alongside his long-time friend and teammate, Noah Anderson, the pair scored a combined total of 64 votes. This is a record for the first and second totals at any club.

During 2025, Rowell re-signed with the Gold Coast Suns until the end of 2027.

'I can't believe I'm standing up here tonight... a lot of boys could have been standing up here tonight, so I feel very humbled and very honoured.'

TOP 10 2025

Matt Rowell (Gold Coast Suns) – 39
Nick Daicos (Collingwood) – 32
Bailey Smith (Geelong) – 29
Jordan Dawson (Adelaide) – 27
Andrew Brayshaw (Fremantle) – 26
Noah Anderson (Gold Coast Suns) – 25
Marcus Bontempelli (Western Bulldogs) – 25
Caleb Serong (Fremantle) – 25
Nasiah Wanganeen-Milera (St Kilda) – 23
Max Gawn (Melbourne) – 23

THE FIRST DECADE

Edward 'Carji' Greeves (Geelong) - 1924
Colin Watson (St Kilda) - 1925
Ivor Warne-Smith (Melbourne) - 1926
Syd Coventry (Collingwood) - 1927
Ivor Warne-Smith (Melbourne) - 1928
Albert Collier (Collingwood) - 1929
*Stan Judkins (Richmond) - 1930
Allan Hopkins (Footscray) - 1930
Harry Collier (Collingwood) - 1930
Haydn Bunton (Fitzroy) - 1931
Haydn Bunton (Fitzroy) - 1932
Wilfred "Chicken" Smallhorn (Fitzroy) - 1933

*In 1930, Stan Judkins, Allan Hopkins and Harry Collier tied for votes. Judkins was awarded the Brownlow Medal after a countback, with officials judging that he was the winner, having played less games for the season than both Hopkins and Collier. In 1989, the then VFL decided to recognise Hopkins and Collier (along with others who had missed out on countback) retrospectively, effectively making the 1930 Brownlow a three-way tie.

OVER TO YOU ANSWERS: **Q1** 1970. **Q2** University, Fremantle, Greater Western Sydney and Gold Coast. **Q3** Chris Scott. **Q4** Carlton, Essendon and Collingwood (16 premierships). **Q5** 1898-99 and 1944 Junction Oval; 1900 East Melbourne Cricket Ground; 1901 Lake Oval; 1942-43, 1945 Princes Park; 1991 Waverley Park; 2020 Gabba; 2021 Perth Stadium. **Q6** Michael Tuck (Hawthorn) with 11 grand final appearances (1975-76, 1978, 1983-89, 1991) and seven premierships (1976, 1978, 1983, 1986, 1988, 1989 and 1991). **Q7** Mrs Marj. Smith (Widow of Norm Smith); the winner, Wayne Harmes (Carlton), is the nephew of Norm Smith. **Q8** 1959 – Cup presented to John Beckwith (Melbourne). **Q9** Bernie Quinlan. **Q10** Alex “Jezza” Jesaulenko (Carlton, 1979). **Q11** Fitzroy (1898-99, 1904-05, 1913, 1916 and 1922. **Q12** 1977. **Q13** Richmond (1927-29), Collingwood (1937-39 and 1979-81) and South Melbourne (1934-36). **Q14** Bill James (Richmond) in 1920 played only one game, the grand final victory against Collingwood. He scored a goal on debut. He returned to Kyabram where he severely injured a foot in a rabbit shooting accident. **Q15** Murray Weideman, Collingwood 1953. He was 17 years 222 days. **Q16** Michael Tuck, Hawthorn 1991. He was 38 years 98 days. **Q17** Travis Varcoe (Geelong) and Travis Cloke (Collingwood). **Q18** Carlton (1906-08), Collingwood (1927-30), Melbourne (1939-41 & 1955-57), Brisbane (2001-03) and Hawthorn (2013-15). **Q19** Fred Wooller. **Q20** 1898 at the Junction Oval, St Kilda (no grand final was played in 1897, the first VFL final series being a round-robin play-off). **Q21** Darcy Fort. **Q22** 1902, Collingwood 9.6 (60) defeated Essendon 3.9 (27). **Q23** Essendon. **Q24** Dan Minogue, Collingwood 1915 and Richmond 1920-21. **Q25** Edward (Teddy) and George Lockwood. **Q26** Kevin Smith (1975). **Q27** 1977. **Q28** Fitzroy. With only four teams competing because of WWI, Fitzroy finished fourth on the ladder, but with improving finals’ form went on to become premiers. **Q29** A premiership – Cliff Rankin (1925), Charlie Clymo (1931) and Chris Scott (2011). **Q30** 1911 (Cards with player numbers were provided for spectators; the *Football Record*, including player numbers, was first published in 1912.) **Q31** Tasmania. **Q32** Gordon (“Nuts”) Coventry (Collingwood 1920-37). **Q33** Essendon (2001) and Collingwood (2002 & 2003). **Q34** 1973. **Q35** 2007 and 2009. **Q36** 1912 – Alan Belcher (Essendon captain) and Vic Belcher (South Melbourne half-forward); 2013 – Bradley Hill (Hawthorn) and Stephen Hill (Fremantle). **Q37** 119 points by Geelong 24.19 (163) to Port Adelaide 6.8 (44) in the 2007 grand final at the MCG. **Q38** Ten (1939, 1940, 1941 and 1948 as a player; 1955, 1956, 1957, 1959, 1960 and 1964 as a coach). **Q39** Collingwood 2.13 (25) defeated Richmond 1.7 (13) in 1927. The grand final took place in torrential rain and freezing winds. **Q40** Bill Twomey Snr.

FACT SHEETS ON THE MCC WEBSITE

The MCC Library’s matchday fact sheets can be accessed through the MCC website at <http://tinyurl.com/mcclcatalogue>

Fact sheets are prepared by MCC Library volunteers David Allen, Eric Panther, Quentin Miller, Dennis Carroll, Ian Wilkinson, Gaye Fitzpatrick and Edward Cohen, along with Lynda Carroll (finals), MCC Deputy Librarian Trevor Ruddell, and the assistance of Col Hutchinson of the AFL.

The MCC thanks the above people and many others for their work on numerous MCC Library Fact Sheets during the 2025 AFL season.