

SPORT with Chris de Kretser and Daryl Timms

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Plenty of burble left in Rex

REX Hunt has been rewarded by Triple M for the station's success in the first footy ratings survey of the season.

Hunt, who joined Triple M on a one-season deal after being booted by 3AW, was summoned to the station on Wednesday and offered a deal for next year.

"I said, 'where do I sign?' When I got the call, I thought this might be it and I could be gone because I only had a one-year deal," Hunt said.

The 61-year-old, who was

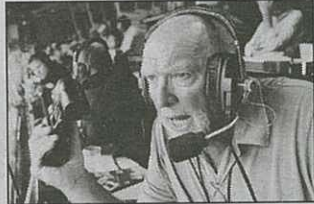
chief football caller at 3AW for 21 years, said his former station was like his family and he started to fret when he left.

"But now I can't get to the footy quickly enough.

"It's really freshened me up. I just can't get enough and this has given me the incentive to go on for as long as I can.

"But if it had ended, I would have much rather had a go and failed than just accepted 3AW's offer of being the second main man on a Sunday."

Hunt, who calls alongside **James Brayshaw** and **Garry**



Revitalised: Rex Hunt

Lyon, said he had changed his style dramatically since joining Triple M, which targets a footy audience 25 to 30 years his junior.

He admitted the station's

footy boss **Lee Simon** explained to him that some things that worked 20 years ago, didn't work now.

"Lee was the one who encouraged me to keep going and it will all come together," Hunt said.

"I have definitely changed my call that much that I reckon I wouldn't be out of place on the ABC. I think the ABC is a marvellous product and **Gerard Whateley** (chief caller) is a fantastic operator."

Hunt once dubbed the ABC 774 footy callers *The Tobin Brothers*, but said the

description was now so far off the mark.

This is Hunt's 44th season as a player or broadcaster.

His record is 208 games for Richmond, Geelong and St Kilda; 78 games as a 3AW around-the-grounds commentator with **Harry Beitzel**; 231 games with **Mike Williamson** on 3DB broadcasting between races; 1432 games as 3AW's chief football caller, and 16 (so far) with Triple M and 12 (so far) with AFL Live. It's a total of 1977 and he expects to pass 2000 during the finals.

Champs on ice

MELBOURNE'S Ice House at Docklands will host an international ice hockey tournament in April.

Ice Hockey Australia has won the rights to hold the World Division 2 Championships.

Australia will compete against teams from Serbia, Belgium, New Zealand, Mexico and North Korea and the winner will be promoted to Division 1 for 2012.

Melbourne Ice has four players in the national team — **Liam Webster**, **Jamie Bourke**, **Michael Beaton** and **Tommy Powell**.

STEP aside **Steven Baker**, this is what you call a black eye — two of them.

Triple Brownlow medallist **Bobby Skilton** copped the shiners — and stitches over both eyes — in the last two games of the 1968 season.

He went into the final round of the season against Collingwood with a broken nose, two black eyes and stitches over his right eye, and then suffered even more pain.

He broke his nose again in an accidental clash with teammate **John Rantall** just before halftime. And then his late mate, Collingwood ruckman **Len Thompson**, put the icing on the cake when he delivered another heavy blow to Skilton's nose and split his left eye open while applying a "shepherd" after halftime.

There was no official vote count or function in 1968 when Skilton won his third Brownlow. Votes were counted on the Monday after the last round.

He recalled being at home in bed watching *Combat*, starring **Vic Morrow**, when he got a call to say he'd won the medal and was rushed to Channel 7's South Melbourne studios where TV Ringside was being shown live.

When Skilton got into the ring and removed his sunglasses, he looked as though he'd gone 12 rounds with a heavyweight.

"John Rantall and I both tried to mark the ball and we finished on the ground with the Collingwood supporters trying to count us out," Skilton recalled.

"We didn't get the full count, but when we hit heads, John spread my nose all over my face again.

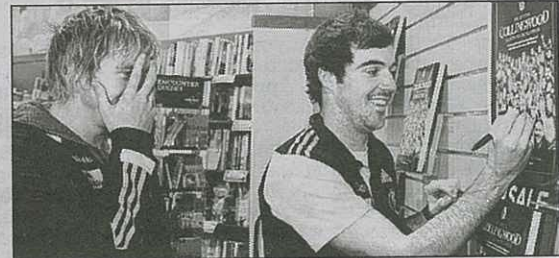
"Then after halftime I ran into a **Len Thompson** shepherd and he opened up my left eye."



SAINT STEVEN BAKER

He reckons that's a shiner

BOBBY SKILTON



Poor career move: Dale Thomas cringes as Steele Sidebottom goes to work on an image of Nathan Buckley. Picture: FIONA HAMILTON

Drawing Bucks' attention

OUR name-of-the-year man, **Steele Sidebottom**, has been stung again by a Magpie teammate.

At the launch of the *Official Collingwood Illustrated Encyclopedia* yesterday, **Dale Thomas** sat back with glee after coaxing Sidebottom to draw a beard, moustache and glasses on the cover photo of **Nathan Buckley**. Bucks will be the Pies' next coach, so Thomas knows on which side his bread is buttered.



That's a jaw-dropping ruling

MARK Fraser and his mates on the AFL match review panel should try this one on for size.

In a controversial decision, the Ovens and Murray Football League tribunal this week suspended a player for the same number of games as the opponent, whom he hit, is sidelined with a broken jaw.

Wodonga captain **Josh Walker** pleaded not guilty to striking Wangaratta Rovers defender **John Conroy**.

Walker must serve a minimum four-match ban. The league, which will monitor Conroy's injury, will seek independent medical advice if there is a dispute as to when Conroy, who has already missed two matches, can return.

The decision by the independent tribunal was made within the rules of the OMFL and VCFL.

It's expected that Conroy will play against Wangaratta on Sunday, July 18, which means Walker will return in Round 17, two rounds later.

And in what looms as an interesting game, Wodonga clashes with Wangaratta Rovers the following week at W.J. Findlay Oval.

Joffa the bobblehead

FIRST it was the Joffa biography, then the Joffa movie — now it's Joffa bobbleheads.

Seeing is believing and 1000 of these bobbleheads (right) are in a container on their way from China to Australia.

Modelled on Collingwood cheer squad identity **Jeff "Joffa" Corfe** and his famous gold jacket, the figures sell for \$24.95 and proceeds will go to the Epilepsy Foundation of Victoria. Ever heard of voodoo dolls, Joffa?



Licuria pulls on boots again

OLD footballers find it hard to stay retired.

The latest to announce a comeback is former Collingwood midfielder **Paul Licuria** (below) who will play for North Shore in the Geelong Football League.

Licuria, 32, secured a last-minute clearance before Wednesday's Victorian Country Football League deadline.

Licuria, who played 192 games for the Magpies, plans



to turn out for North Shore under former Geelong wingman **Peter Riccardi's** coaching — when his commitments as an assistant coach at Collingwood permit.

Johnson returns for mate

FORMER Richmond captain **Kane Johnson** is making a comeback, too.

Johnson, 32, has signed with **Montrose** to play alongside former Tigers teammate **Troy Simmonds**, who retired last month.

Captain from 2005-08, Johnson has not played since he retired from Richmond.

He played in Adelaide's 1997-98 premiership teams and joined the Tigers in 2002.

Won't be maiden for long

CHEEKILY named horse **Beataroundthebush** ran third on debut at Sale yesterday.

The horse, which is a two year-old gelding, is by **Foreplay**.

Last flicker for 'Candles'

HAWTHORN is mourning the death of Clayton "Candles" **Thompson**, who died in Adelaide on Monday. He was 80.

Thompson was one of the first big-name interstate recruits signed by Hawthorn.

He got his nickname because of his 198cm and 88kg frame.

Thompson kicked 54 goals in his three seasons — 1954-56 — with the club.

Dusting off for Ashes

PREPARATIONS for the Ashes summer of cricket have begun in earnest.

Cricket Australia staff visited the MCG this week to check on ways to improve facilities for players, the media and spectators.

Tickets go on sale soon with demand expected to be high for the Boxing Day Test. Fans are being reminded to register at cricket.com.au to gain priority access to tickets.