



LIFE MEMBER

Stan ("Dasher") Thomas

9 May 1892–2 November 1858



Stan Thomas played 137 games for Geelong (1915 and 1917–1925), and also played for Victoria in 1920. 'Pivot' of the *Geelong Advertiser* described Thomas as 'a player of indefatigable energy' and 'one of the most tenacious of the club's followers and defenders.'¹ Col Hutchinson describes him as a 'strong, determined follower and fearless backman' whose 'toughness and purposeful team-work were assets to Geelong'. Col writes:

Team-mates appreciated his shepherding skill and he had the ability to nullify the effectiveness of opponents. He was quite fast and possessed excellent stamina.²

On one occasion in 1923, playing against Collingwood, Thomas received a blow behind the left ear. He continued to play but had no idea what he was doing. At half time he was nearly unconscious on the dressing room table but he went on again and played quite well. After the match, his team mates dressed him, took him home and put him to bed. The next morning, he did not know who had won the match and did not recall playing in the second half.³

In 1925, Stan Thomas was reported after round 12 when Geelong played North Melbourne at Arden Street. Harold Johnston of North Melbourne went down after coming in to contact with Geelong's Arthur Coghlan. Soon afterwards, another North Melbourne player received a blow to the head. A spectator threw a piece of concrete which struck Coghlan on the knee, and a brawl ensued. Thomas and Coghlan were reported.

According to his family, Stan later said that he was told before the game that a North Melbourne player was out to get him. When he went up to take a mark, someone called out, 'He's under you, Stan', so Stan brought his elbows down.⁴

The tribunal suspended Stan Thomas and Arthur Coghlan for 26 matches. North Melbourne player Fred Rutley was suspended for life, for

deliberately kicking a Geelong player. At that time, the decision of the tribunal was final. A public meeting at His Majesty's Theatre in Geelong was attended by about 500 people, and passed two resolutions. Firstly, an emphatic protest was lodged against Thomas and Coghlan being disqualified until the end of the next season; secondly, the meeting urged the Geelong Football Club to endeavour to have an appeal board constituted by the League.⁵

Stan Thomas and Arthur Coghlan could not play in the 1925 Grand Final against Collingwood, but they played an important role in the ceremony which took place at Corio Oval next day. The *Geelong Advertiser* reported:

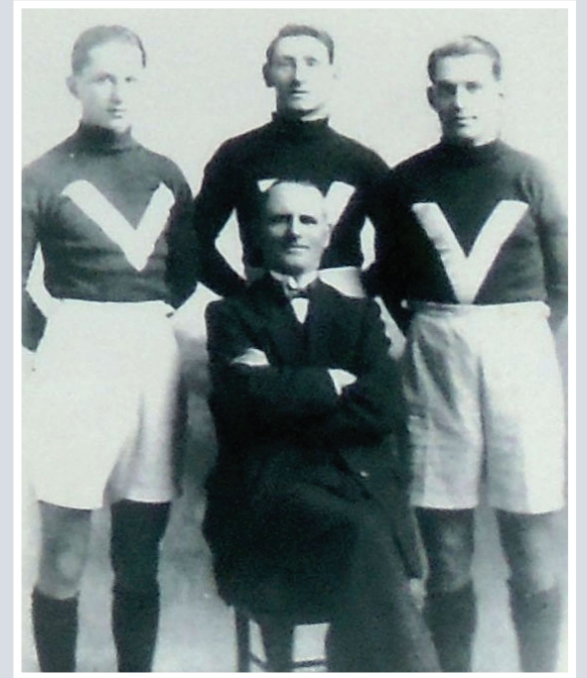
...supporters of the club, headed by those popular players Stan Thomas and Arthur Coghlan, set about to bury the 'Magpie'. The Collingwood visitors appreciably assisted in the 'solemn' service as they acted as mourners, and stood bare-headed during the ceremony.⁶

Stan Thomas did not play again. The controversial tribunal decision ended his football career.⁷ However, he remained involved as a member of the GFC match committee in 1928 and general committee in 1943, and was made a GFC life member.

Both Arthur Coghlan and Stan Thomas played in the 1933 past players match, and Stan Thomas became one of the Geelong Past Players and Officials Association's long-serving committee men (1933–1958), President (1939–1958) and was made a life member in 1958. He was described by the *Geelong Advertiser* as one of the:

...veterans who kept Geelong in top football in difficult years, and maintained a constant interest in club activities ... particularly through the Past Players' Association ... He was particularly keen that former players could watch games at Kardinia Park in comfort, and he was particularly delighted when the small stand in the past players' reserve was opened in 1954.⁸

Stan Thomas worked for the Victorian Railways.⁹ He died on 1 November 1958 aged 66 at his home at 213 Malop Street. He was survived by his wife, Ethel, and four children.



Harold Craven, Stan Thomas and Cliff Rankin with GFC President Arthur Bowman 1920

LATE "DASHER" THOMAS WAS ONE OF GEELONG'S COLORFUL OLD PLAYERS

(By "Pivot")

One of Geelong's most colorful players in the last half century was Mr. Stan ("Dasher") Thomas whose funeral took place yesterday, and his death removes another of the dwindling band of veterans who kept Geelong in top football in difficult years, and maintained a constant interest in club activities.

After giving the club a number of years of service "Dasher" Thomas went out of the game during the 1925 season — Geelong's first premiership year. He was a player of indefatigable energy and was one of the most tenacious of the club's



Geelong Advertiser, 4 Nov 1958, p.1

Sources

- ¹ *Geelong Advertiser*, 4 Nov. 1958, p.1
- ² Col Hutchinson, bio notes prepared for Past Players Association, Nov. 2012
- ³ Hutchinson, C. 1984, *Cat's Tales*, Geelong Advertiser Pty Ltd, p. 47
- ⁴ Joan Hepworth, talking to Susan Kruss, 2 April 2013
- ⁵ *Geelong Advertiser*, 15 Aug. 1925; Begg, P. 1990, *Geelong: The First 150 Years*, Geelong Advertiser Pty Ltd, np.
- ⁶ *Geelong Advertiser*, 1925, quoted in Hutchinson, C. *Cat's Tales* p.51
- ⁷ Every Player, Geelong Football Club website www.geelongfootballclub.com.au, accessed 17 Dec. 2012
- ⁸ *Geelong Advertiser*, 4 Nov. 1958, p.1
- ⁹ *Geelong Advertiser*, 4 Nov. 1958, p.1

