

Bullants coach in off-field drama

Glenn McFarlane, Paul Amy

Struggling VFL club Northern Bullants has hit more turbulence.

Senior coach Rohan Welsh has been stood down over an alleged verbal clash with a board member.

Welsh will be the subject of an investigation into an alleged incident with vice-president Vas Nikolovski in the carpark at the Northern Football League game between Heidelberg and Banyule last Friday.



Nikolovski reported the matter to the board. Welsh is denying any wrongdoing and has told the club he is taking the allegations seriously. He is happy to participate in any investigation.

It's unclear if the investigation will be finished in time for the former Carlton forward to coach the Bullants in Saturday's game against Port Melbourne at Cramer St.

He was absent from training on Monday night when Ants president Whitlam Malkoun and new general manager Peter German told the players of the investigation.

The AFL is aware of the situation.

A few weeks ago, the club called in board members for an update on its financial position after it emerged Welsh had not been paid for last season and was weighing up his future.

He was also disenchanted with the club's handling of the potential recruitment of former AFL player Tarryn Thomas.

Welsh had a severe foot infection before round 1 and was unable to coach the team. Senior assistant Rocky Iannello filled in.

The Ants have made a rugged start to the season, with a handful of hefty losses.

The Bullants have received some good news.

The club is to receive a \$700,000 grant should the Labor Federal Government be re-elected.

The money will allow for an upgrade of the lighting at the Cramer St ground.

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Lyon livid at tribunal

'Filthy' Saints coach launches into 'broken VFL system'

Tyler Lewis

St Kilda coach Ross Lyon says he is "filthy" at what he calls "a broken system" as he launched a passionate defence of suspended draftee Alix Taura.

Taura was given a four-game ban at the VFL tribunal for rough conduct.

But with byes at the start and at the end of Taura's four-match sanction, the teenager is ineligible to play football for as long as six weeks.

In a fiery response, similar to his outburst during last weekend's loss to Brisbane, Lyon questioned the tribunal's decision and how Taura received the same penalty as



Saints coach Ross Lyon

charged Richmond defender Noah Balta.

He also said it underlined why clubs were wanting to break away from the VFL in search of a feeder system that better suits their needs.

"Is it four or is it six weeks? We're incredibly disappointed, I am really frustrated,

it talks to a broken system," Lyon said.

"We've already had one bye, we're having another bye this week, I just don't understand the human side. The blow-up on me making a sub, we've got a first-year, top-10 draft pick that if you think the penalty is four weeks, that's OK, but they know we've got a bye and then at the end of that there's another bye.

"How the tribunal doesn't take into consideration that it's six weeks; Noah Balta got four weeks stand down for an assault off the field, with respect.

"We've got a kid that concussed a player. It's a six-week penalty, there's no consider-

ation - as Paul Roos would say, 'common sense is commonly uncommon'."

Lyon said it was little wonder AFL clubs wanted to deviate from the VFL.

"I am filthy and no wonder AFL clubs talk 'let's have a breakaway group from a 22-team competition with four or five clubs and play each other'," he said.

"It's not worth the risk and there's no recompense, consideration or adjustment for the reality of a misaligned fixture of a feeder competition to the AFL - I am absolutely filthy. What I would like is for common sense to prevail here for a young player. We talk about mental health, we're

talking about mental health of a kid getting feedback about opponent awareness.

"The kid has been suspended for four and he'll miss six. How do you reckon his mental health is going at the minute? And mine."

Taura's sanction was not the only well-documented case of Tuesday night, with North Melbourne's Paul Curtis handed three weeks for his rundown tackle on Port Adelaide's Josh Sinn.

Lyon said there was an argument for concussion legal battles "taking away from the essence of the game".

"What am I allowed to say and what am I not allowed to say? Like, it's wowee," he said.

Magpie Jack Crisp will breaks Jim Stynes's consecutive games record this weekend.
Picture: Michael Klein

Crisp lands tasty record

Jackie Epstein

Collingwood star Jack Crisp has literally been taking it one week at a time this season. With the games record looming large, the Magpie has been well aware that history beckons. On Saturday night against Geelong, when he carries his three daughters onto the MCG for the first time (all his milestone matches have been interstate) he will play in his 245th consecutive match.

After nearly 11 years, starting in Brisbane, he'll surpass the great Jim Stynes for the longest games streak in VFL/AFL history. "It's pretty cool, the whole build up and being constantly asked about it the last couple of years," Crisp, 31, said. "To have my name up there in history with someone like Jim Stynes is pretty amazing and it's never going to stop being a very humbling." The feat is all the more remarkable when you consider injury and form.

At a Collingwood milk bar on Wednesday he received a commemorative pair of boots from Puma, plus their unique gift - some Jack Crisp crisps - which are a limited edition 100 cans of chips with the slogan "once he pops, he can't stop!"

Boxshall set for debut

Hugh Boxshall will make his AFL debut for St Kilda at Marvel Stadium on Friday night against Fremantle.

The No.45 pick from last year's draft has starred in the VFL in recent weeks. He had 33 touches and nine tackles for Sandringham against Footscray and followed it with 24 disposals and 10 tackles against Brisbane.

Coach Ross Lyon said Mattaas Phillipou - who

suffered a corky at training on Wednesday - was a chance to play seniors this weekend.

"It's more likely than not. He trained with great intensity, he's a great athlete, a real strong mindset," Lyon said.

"We would prefer we had a string of performances where the door wasn't open, but that's not what's occurred the last couple of weeks so there's real opportunity for him to come straight back in."

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Dogs' tiny crowd for Mars mission

Lauren Wood

Construction works at Mars Stadium will leave the Western Bulldogs with their smallest normal-season crowd since 1992 this weekend.

Only in the Covid-affected 2020 season did the Bulldogs have a crowd lower than what's expected when they host Port Adelaide at Saturday's sold out game in Ballarat. Redevelopment has restricted ground ca-

capacity to around 5000 for the Dogs' two home games there this season and those in 2026.

"The Western Stand (including its 5,042 seats) will remain in place and accessible throughout the build," the club said in a statement.

"However, during this time the overall stadium capacity will be reduced by approximately 50 per cent and standing room will not be available."

Previously the ground could

accommodate 11,000 people.

General admission members have the option of upgrading to a reserved seat membership or redeeming a game at Marvel Stadium in exchange.

"These upgrades will add 5,000 new permanent seats, increasing the stadium's seated capacity to 10,000 ... and improved accessibility which will all contribute to an improved match day experience," the club said.