



MCC LIBRARY FACT SHEET JUNE 21, 2024

AFL 2024 ROUND 15 CARLTON V GEELONG

AUSTRALIAN KICKERS IN AMERICAN FOOTBALL

Both clubs playing today have produced NFL punters, Geelong's Ben Graham being much better known for his football success in America than the first Australian to play in the NFL, Olympic high jumper Colin Ridgeway, who had a connection to the Carlton Football Club.

The best known AFL players to have achieved success as punters in the United States are Darren Bennett, Ben Graham and Saverio Rocca. Bennett, the most successful Australian player in NFL history, played 78 games with West Coast and Melbourne before moving to the US at the age of 30 where he played 159 NFL games over 11 seasons. Rocca played 257 games for Collingwood and North Melbourne and 112 NFL games.

Interestingly, however, the story of Australian kickers achieving success in the US began way back in 1896 when Pat O'Dea (pictured) gained a scholarship to study law at the University of Wisconsin on the basis of his prodigious kicking. Born in Kilmore in 1872, O'Dea played with both Melbourne and Essendon during their VFA days, before following his brother Andy to the United States where the latter had been appointed rowing coach at Wisconsin. Soon after his arrival, Pat had a casual kick of the American ball on the campus and so impressed the football coach that he was swiftly offered a place at the university on the condition that he joined the football squad.

It wasn't long before O'Dea became a star player in the team and, as collegiate football was the senior competition at the time, he gained national recognition as Wisconsin's full back during the period before the forward pass was introduced to American football, which meant that kicking was used much more frequently than it is now. At the time, the American football was similar to the Australian ball, being rounder and less pointed than the modern version, which made it more conducive to drop kicking. Field goals were worth five points and touchdowns four. O'Dea was named All-American for football in 1898 and 1899, and was also an outstanding collegiate track and field athlete.

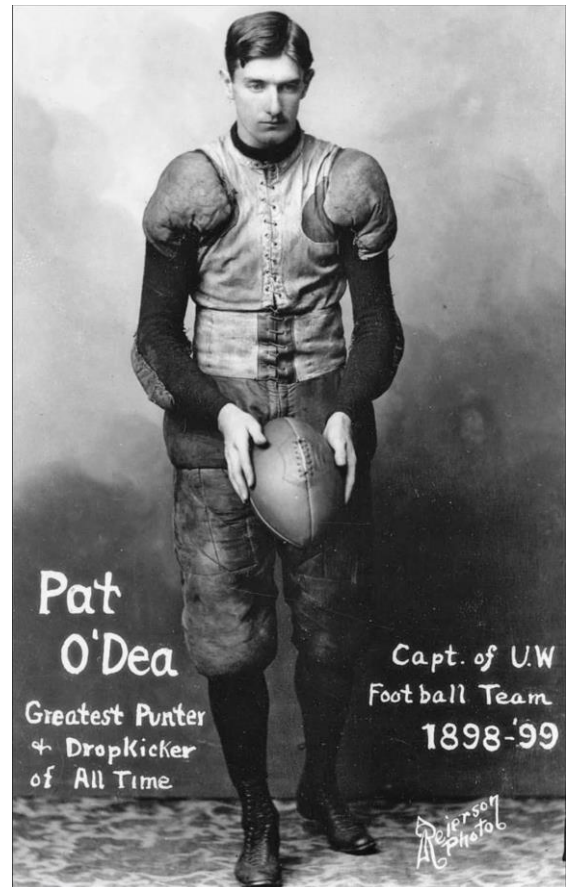
After graduating, O'Dea coached at Notre Dame and Stanford and then practised law. Uncomfortable with the fame which came with being the legendary "Kangaroo Kicker", O'Dea disappeared completely from the public gaze in 1917, changed his name and moved to Lassen County, California. Then in 1934 a journalist, following a tip-off, discovered O'Dea living quietly as "Charles J. Mitchell" and working as a lumber company statistician. Unfazed that he had been discovered, O'Dea explained:

I wanted to get away from what seemed to me to be all in the past. As Pat O'Dea I seemed to be very much just an ex-Wisconsin football player. I was very happy as Mitchell for a while, but later I often found it rather unpleasant not to be the man I actually am. So I am going to be Pat O'Dea for the rest of my life. Perhaps I should never have been anything else.

On his return to the University of Wisconsin in 1934 he was pictured on the front cover of the match program with the headline "Wisconsin's Greatest Homecoming". He continued to make trips to see his old team play for the rest of his life. Never having returned to Australia, O'Dea spent the last four months of his life in hospital in San Francisco. Having shunned publicity for such a long time, his last few months were full of accolades. President Kennedy sent him well wishes, and he was elected to the College Football Hall of Fame a day before his death in April 1962.

Returning to the modern era, Ben Graham played 219 games with Geelong (1993-2004), captaining the club from 2002 to 2004. At that point he decided to leave for the US, initially playing for the New York Jets, and then for the New Orleans Saints, the Arizona Cardinals and the Detroit Lions. In 2009 he became the first Australian to play in the Super Bowl.

Colin Ridgeway played as a ruckman for Carlton's Under 19s and Reserves in 1954/55, before concentrating on his major sporting interest, high jumping. He then competed at the 1956 Olympics and the 1958 Empire and Commonwealth Games before taking up a scholarship at Lamar University in Texas. The first Australian to play in the NFL, he had a short career as a punt kicker with the Dallas Cowboys.



THIS ROUND IN HISTORY – ROUND 15 ON THE MCG

The highest Round 15 score on the MCG is 27.20 (182) by Essendon against Melbourne 8.12 (60) in 1986. The overall Round 15 record is 28.23 (191) by Hawthorn against Geelong 13.6 (84) at Princes Park in 1977. The most goals by an individual is 11 by Peter Sumich for West Coast against Essendon in 1992 and by Gary Ablett Snr for Geelong against Melbourne in 1993. The overall Round 15 record is 12 which has been recorded by three players – Bob Pratt for South Melbourne against Footscray at the Lakeside Oval in 1934, Peter Hudson for Hawthorn against St Kilda at Glenferrie Oval in 1971 and Simon Beasley for Footscray against Melbourne at the Western Oval in 1985. The highest score in a quarter is 10.5 (65) by Richmond in the last quarter against Hawthorn in 1997. Richmond kicked 22.13 (145) to win by 76 points. The overall Round 15 record for the highest score in a quarter is 12.6 (78) by Geelong against Brisbane Bears at Carrara in 1989. Geelong kicked 22.19 (151) to win by 74 points after leading by only 21 points at three-quarter time. The highest Round 15 attendance is 81,099 in 1960 when Melbourne defeated Collingwood by 46 points at the MCG.

STATISTICS FOR CARLTON V GEELONG

Carlton v Geelong by venue

	Won by Carlton	Won by Geelong	Drawn
Corio Oval	20	20	1
Docklands	1	15	0
Kardinia Park	24	21	0
MCG	9	11	1
Princes Park	61	33	0
SCG	0	1	0
Waverley Park	4	3	0
	119	104	2

Last Time They Met – Round 7, 2024, MCG

	Geelong	Carlton
Quarter time	5.2	2.8
Half time	10.4	6.9
Three-quarter time	13.9	11.10
Full time	18.10 (118)	15.15 (105)

Highest Score

Carlton	23.28 (166)	Rd 17	1944	PP
Geelong	24.18 (162)	Rd 2	2007	Dock

Lowest Score

Carlton	1.5 (11)	Rd 2	1899	PP
Geelong	3.4 (22)	Rd 4	1919	PP

Greatest Winning Margin

Carlton	106 points	Rd 17	1944	PP
Geelong	78 points	Rd 2	2007	Dock

Most Goals in a Match (10 goals or more)

11	L. Hagger	Geel	Rd 4	1927	Corio
10	L. White	Geel	Rd 19	1947	KP

DID YOU KNOW?

- Carlton and Geelong first played on August 17, 1867, at the Argyle Ground, Geelong. Geelong won two goals to one before about 2,000 spectators (in this era matches had no fixed time, the winner was decided by the best of three goals, and ends were only changed after goals).
- Carlton and Geelong were founding members of both the VFA (1877) and VFL/AFL (1897).
- Prior to the foundation of the VFL/AFL these clubs had played each other 46 times, with Geelong winning 24 of these games, Carlton 14, and eight games were drawn (prior to 1897 only goals counted). From 1867 to 1896 Geelong had kicked 160 goals against Carlton's 134.
- Since the foundation of the VFL/AFL these clubs have met in 225 League games, Carlton winning 119 of those matches, Geelong 104, and two were drawn. From 1897 Carlton has scored 2,574 goals and 2,922 behinds (18,366 points) against Geelong, and conceded 2,449 goals and 2,685 behinds (17,379 points). They have met in 12 VFL/AFL finals, Carlton winning six, Geelong five and one was drawn. Carlton won the only VFL/AFL grand final between the clubs in 1995.
- The Cats and the Blues have also met in 10 night/pre-season series games between 1961 and 2009, Geelong winning seven and Carlton three – including the 1997 pre-season grand final at the MCG. In night/pre-season series games Geelong has scored 2 nine-point super goals, 111 goals, and 115 behinds (799 points), to Carlton's 2 super goals, 95 goals, and 90 behinds (678 points).
- Carlton has produced six Brownlow Medallists: Bert Deacon (1947), John James (1961), Gordon Collis (1964), Greg Williams (1994), Chris Judd (2010) and Patrick Cripps (2022).
- Geelong has produced seven Brownlow Medallists: Edward "Carji" Greeves (1924), Bernie Smith (1951), Alistair Lord (1962), Paul Couch (1989), Jimmy Bartel (2007), Gary Ablett Jnr (2009) and Patrick Dangerfield (2016).
- John Nicholls leads Carlton's list of best and fairest winners, taking out the award five times. Geelong's Garry Hocking won four best and fairest awards.
- Geelong's Gary Ablett Snr kicked 10 goals or more in a match 12 times. Carlton's Harry "Soapy" Vallence performed the feat four times.

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>

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