



## Former Kangaroo Petrie keen to hop across to West Coast to replace injured Naitanui

Released North Melbourne veteran Drew Petrie (left) has confirmed his interest in a move to West Coast, but says he doesn't expect to know his future for several weeks. The Eagles are reported to be considering picking up Petrie as a replacement for injured ruckman Nic Naitanui, who will miss most of the 2017 season after surgery on a ruptured anterior cruciate

ligament. Petrie believes he would be up to the task if required. "They haven't given me any guarantees," he said. "They've scoped out my level of interest, and I think they've got a few other players that they've got their eye on. I think it's going to be a few weeks before they give me any guarantees or certainties, but I'm feeling OK at the moment." Petrie kicked

428 goals in 316 games for the Kangaroos between 2001 and 2016. He said the club would forever remain close to his heart, even if he didn't remain close to theirs. "I'll bleed and blue and white," he said. "But the club was great; they took me off the website about three minutes after I got the flick. They've been quick to take all those things."

# Allan accused of telling GWS staffer to delete email

Michael Gleeson

Former Greater Western Sydney football boss Graeme Allan told a staff member to delete an email from Lachie Whitfield's girlfriend that raised alarms about the player's alleged drug use and behaviour.

Whitfield's girlfriend had emailed Brett Hand, a player welfare worker at the club, expressing concern about her boyfriend's behaviour, his possible drug use and that he was hiding from drug-testers.

Hand is understood to have approached Allan about the email. He was told by Allan that he would deal with it and instructed Hand to delete the email. Allan is understood to have told Hand the girlfriend was erratic, difficult and that he would handle the matter.

Hand deleted the email and is not accused of any wrong-doing as he was following instructions from a manager and believed the matter was being dealt with.

Allan, who has replaced Neil Balme as football director at Collingwood, had also deleted text messages on his phone between him and Whitfield and player welfare worker Craig Lambert.

An AFL investigation into the matter discovered the missing text messages and email.

The text messages and email are at the heart of the AFL investigation into claims the player was deliberately hidden away from the

club at the home of welfare manager Lambert for fear that drug-testers may have intended to test him.

The fear, as expressed in the text messages, was that he had taken an illicit substance that might have been laced with a performance-enhancing substance such as had occurred with Collingwood pair Lachlan Keefe and Josh Thomas, who were subsequently banned for two years.

Avoiding an illicit drug test would only have drawn a strike under the AFL's illicit drug code, but seeking to avoid a test out of fear of performance-enhancing drugs being present falls under the WADA code and if found guilty, draws a mandatory minimum four-year ban for the player and the two officials, Allan and Lambert.

The AFL concluded a long investigation before presenting the brief to ASADA which considered the details and returned the brief to the AFL requesting it get legal advice on the next move.

The AFL is understood to have since received that legal advice and is deciding how next to proceed.

There is understood to be some scope to charge the players with conduct unbecoming under the AFL's rules.

There are no mandatory penalties for someone found guilty of that charge.

Allan and Lambert have consistently protested their innocence to their new clubs. Lambert is now employed at the Brisbane Lions.



Injured skipper Bob Murphy goes for a run with the team at Whitten Oval. Photo: Getty Images

## Bulldogs set to block out the razzmatazz, focus on business

Andrew Tate

As sidelined Western Bulldogs captain Bob Murphy says ruckman Jordan Roughead should recover from his eye bleed to play in the grand final against Sydney, midfielder Lachie Hunter says the grand finalists will kick into game mode on Thursday and switch off all outside distractions.

Hunter, speaking at a promotional event at the MCG with teammate Jake Stringer, said the Bulldogs were well aware of the need to embrace the excitement of grand final week, but then leave it behind.

"It's such a different week and a one-off for the year. You've just got to embrace all the different things that come with it and take it as it is ... you can't hide from them," Hunter said.

"[We're] trying to keep it as normal a week as you can, but it's obviously a bit hard because it's a grand final. We'll keep the meetings the same, but there will obviously be a fair bit of fanfare outside of the club. Probably tomorrow we'll switch into game mode and then the meetings will really kick into gear and turn our head to the game."

On the difficult decision facing Bulldogs selectors with regards to Roughead, Lin Jong and Matt Suckling, Hunter was diplomatic.

"I'm glad I don't have to pick it, it is obviously a really tough one ... so we'll leave that up to them."

Hunter, a Bulldogs father-son selection thanks to his father Mark, said his dad was enjoying the week.

"The whole family is rapt," he said. "Everyone who is part of the Bulldog community is obviously

looking forward to the weekend."

Stringer said he was thrilled to be a part of the Bulldogs' attempt at history.

"It's just an exciting week for the club and for me personally and all the boys," he said. "Our first grand final for 55 years. We are really looking forward to getting out there on Saturday and letting it rip."

"We had a really young group and we have matured a lot in two years and I'm just proud of everyone and all the supporters who stuck with us and we're looking all right now."

Stringer said the Dogs knew what they had to do to beat the Swans.

"I think it just really starts with the contest inside and then it sort of spreads away. I think if we get the contest right it will go a long way."

## Eade leans toward Dogs, not upset over O'Meara

Andrew Tate

Gold Coast coach Rodney Eade says that while he may not have agreed to it, he isn't upset at Jaeger O'Meara's decision to request a trade to Hawthorn.

O'Meara has missed the past two seasons with knee problems since succumbing to a patella tendon injury in April 2015. O'Meara hasn't played in an Eade-coached Gold Coast team.

Eade said there was no further word on compensation from the player's preferred club.

"We'll just wait for Hawthorn to get back to us ... nothing's really

eventuated at this stage, there's still a bit of shadow boxing at the moment. No, I wasn't (upset) because I haven't coached him. "He hasn't played a game ... There's no point being angry about it, it's just the way footy is and if we can come out in front on the deal, well, that's fine and we move on."

Eade said he was hoping to get some experienced talent in the trading period.

"It's a good draft and having so many picks we will be able to convert them into players ... from our point of view we need to get some midfielders and we need some good picks as well to go to the draft."

Eade, who coached both the Western Bulldogs and Sydney, says he is leaning towards the Dogs in the grand final. He said the Dogs' sudden emergence showed what was possible with a young team, but it was surprising how quickly they had come on.

"Probably with their age, yeah, I think they've done a terrific job from where they've come from," Eade told SEN. "Obviously in previous few years they struggled to score a bit, but they've certainly improved that, improved their run and now they've got a good balance in their side."

"Once the season unfolded, I

think the top seven teams were relatively even and you get your players on the park and, they are missing a couple of players, anything can happen and they've been fantastic the past three weeks."

Eade said both teams had challenges in the big game, although he tipped a defensive slug.

"I think there's a bit of query on a few players at Sydney so hopefully for their sake they have got everyone right," he said. "Obviously both teams are very good defensively so there is going to be a lot of pressure ... I think either team has got to take their chances when they present, it's no good

kicking eight goals 12, you've got to kick 12 goals eight."

Eade said when he coached the Bulldogs he did not feel the weight of history and the club's lack of success. "I didn't feel the pressure as such as if that was a burden, it was sort of having an experience as a player and you wanted it for the players to experience and also for the supporters," he said.

"You see the genuine passion in the supporters and they were terrific support and they've stuck with the club for so long ... you really want them to experience that and hopefully this weekend they can."

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