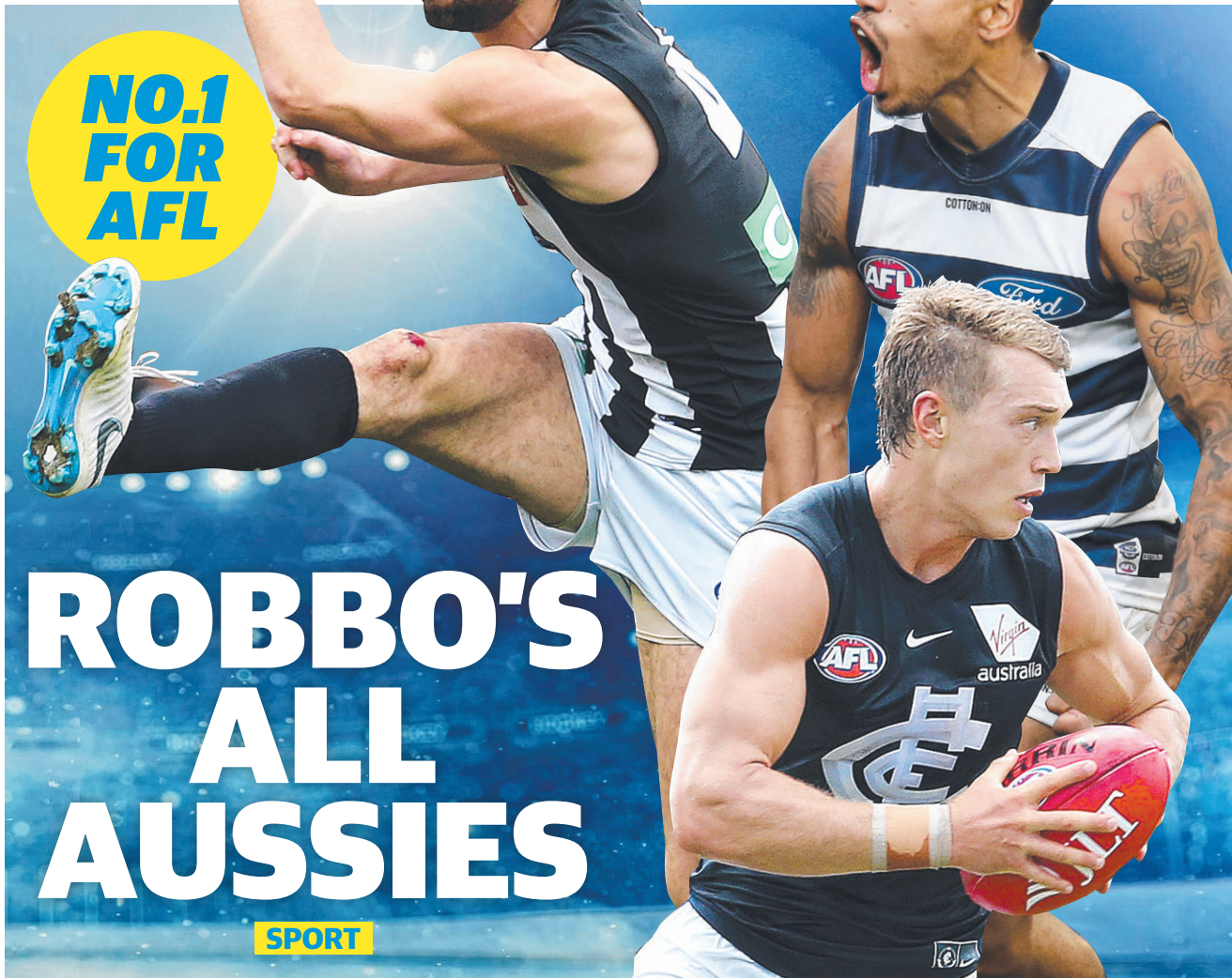


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P35-37

GOUGED AT BOWSER

KIERAN ROONEY AND TAMARA McDONALD

MOTORISTS are being urged to "top off" their petrol tanks instead of filling up as prices skyrocket over the long weekend.

The average price of unleaded petrol sat at 155.4c a litre across Melbourne yesterday and was expected to keep rising.

Truganina is tipped to be the best area to fill up over the next few days, with an average price of 132.4c.

FULL REPORT, PAGE 2

Kayo

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I can't get Aiaa back

TAMSIN ROSE

THE devastated father of a young student raped and murdered in Bundoora wants a life sentence for her killer.

Codey Herrmann, 20, yesterday admitted to murdering Israeli woman Aiaa Maasarwe, 21, in January shortly after she got off a tram.

"I can't get Aiaa back. I wish no one in the world this pain," father Saeed Maasarwe said.

FULL REPORT, PAGE 10

EXCLUSIVE Up to 120 players and coaches have serious issues, expert says

FOOTY'S GAMBLING EPIDEMIC

TWO current AFL stars have lost \$1 million each on the punt and up to 120 players and coaches have gambling issues, a leading counsellor says.

Jan Beames, who specialises in helping elite athletes fight gambling addictions, described the problem in football as "an epidemic".

Two players — one from a Victorian team and the other from an interstate club — have each lost or owe \$1 million, she revealed.

Up to 120 players and coaches had gambling addictions or chronic issues,

MARK ROBINSON
CHIEF FOOTBALL WRITER

mainly betting on horses, Mrs Beames said as she called for major reform to tackle the problem.

Players had even contemplated suicide at the height of their distress, Mrs Beames said.

Professional footballers had also described how they escaped the pressures of the game by "gambling in the on-season and drugs in the off-season", she said.

"I'd say it's an epidemic," Mrs Beames, who has counselled more than 50 players, said of the game's gambling problem.

"I've had two players in recent times ... who have gambled seven figures. They've lost and owe what would add up to a million dollars.

"I've had players with suicidal thoughts. I have spoken to a psychiatrist who goes to a club and we think if it's not handled properly and the AFL don't get all over it, there will be a suicide."

One player estimated 70 per cent of his teammates gambled, while another said 65 per cent, raising concerns that younger athletes were being "groomed".

"They come into a club, they haven't gambled before, and there's a sense of belonging," Mrs Beames said.

"They have these players standing around with their iPhone open and next minute they're hooked. It's grooming. It's a lot bigger than what we realise."

CONTINUED PAGE 8

Footy is facing a gambling 'epidemic'

FROM PAGE 1

Mrs Beames and her corporate psychologist husband Colin called for the game's leaders to support a comprehensive anti-gambling initiative, describing the current program run by the AFL Players Association as "pathetic".

The couple recently met AFL head of football Steve Hocking.

"There's a whole issue around the response, or lack of, to gambling in the AFL," Mr Beames said. "We believe gambling is the biggest issue in the AFL. What's likely to happen is the AFL will take more control of that in terms of mental health services.

"They act for good, they do a lot of good, so this is an area they potentially can make an issue and I think Steve Hocking wants to, because it's a major issue."

Currently, players are sent to counsellors through the AFLPA.

"We're very disappointed with the AFLPA and, by the way, so are a lot of players I've seen," Mrs Beames said.

Mr Hocking said the AFL's impending appointment of mental health officer would help the league understand why players gambled.

"When you ask the question of how big a problem it is, it's all wrapped up in anxiety and mental health," Mr Hocking said. "There are things that trigger that kind of behaviour as a release mechanism."

He would not comment on the assertion that gambling among players and coaches was an epidemic.

"I don't think it would be any different to what's going on in society," he said.

Mrs Beames said illicit drug use was also a major concern.

"A couple of players have said to me, it's gambling in the on-season and drugs in the off-season," she said.

"It's something we all need to be aware of, the players are scrutinised to an inch of their lives.

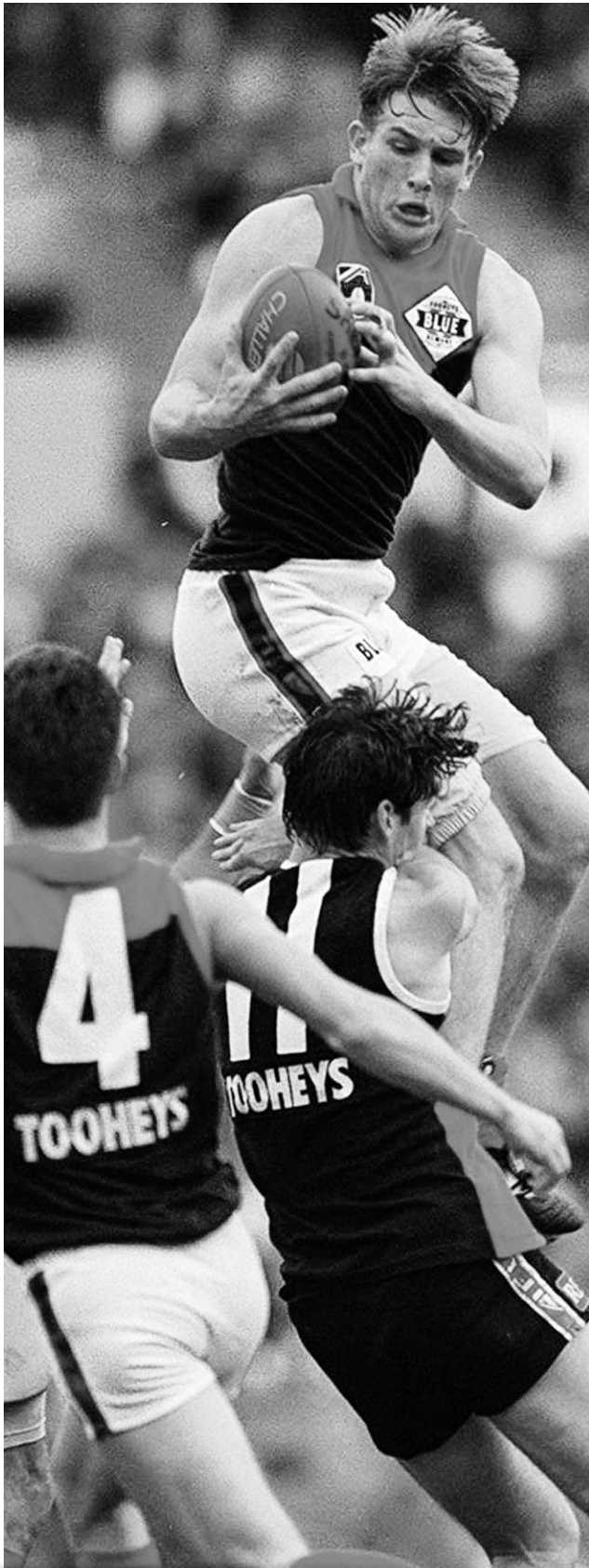
"Their lives are so rigid. They are told what to do, to be there at that time, you have got to be this meeting, and guess what? It's a release.

"Players will tell me gambling is a release for them and it's the same with drugs."

mark.robinson@news.com.au

TIME TO TACKLE

'Some players will leave with nothing'



Ex-Demons high flyer David Schwarz credits his recovery from gambling addiction to counsellor Jan Beames (left).

ON an antique armchair in a small room in an East Melbourne office, an AFL player was talking and Jan Beames was flabbergasted at what she was being told.

"I had a player — and this is not uncommon — who had lost a million dollars and he said to me he was good at gambling," she says. "I said, 'Are you telling me you think you're good at gambling and you've lost a million dollars?'"

"It was like the penny had dropped. He kept believing he was good. What happens is, they start gambling and they can't stop. The worst thing that happens is they win and they get all that adrenaline.

"I had young players start betting in Hong Kong and Singapore, they had no idea about the front or back of the horse. It's everything just to bet."

Mrs Beames knows her sport — her uncle was celebrated Australian cricket all-rounder and St Kilda footballer Keith Miller and her father-in-law was Percy Beames, a triple-premiership winner at Melbourne, first-class cricketer and journalist.

As a gambling counsellor she is working with six players and has had 50 on her books, as well as swimmers, runners, rowers and basketballers.

Former Demons star and ex-gambling addict David Schwarz — whose last bet was a \$2500 wager placed on the day of his son's christening — credited his recovery to her.

Essendon forward Jake Stringer, who reportedly lost more than \$100,000, also thanks Mrs Beames for saving him in her book *Exiting The Gambling Addiction*.

"As well as sorting out my gambling, she helped me resolve other areas of my life. This got me out of my depression," Stringer says.

Now Mrs Beames and her husband Colin, a corporate psychologist and co-author of the book, want an overhaul of the current anti-gambling program run by the AFL Players Association.



MARK ROBINSON

"I see players who have anxiety problems and anxiety is underneath a lot of the gamblers," she says. "If you heard some of the stories ... you'd be very distressed.

"Some of these players are going to leave with nothing and I mean nothing."

Mrs Beames sees players individually and sometimes with their partners, who are often angry at the initial session because that is when they learn the extent of the problem.

"It's not only players, but anyone who gambles, will tell you when they are being honest and have decided to look at their life, they feel so much shame about all the lies they've told," she says.

"They'll ring up their managers and say, 'I've got a traffic fine,' because they want more money.

"Until they're prepared to really face their demons about gambling, often they will minimise how much they are gambling. That's a form of lying."

She has had countless players, from up to 10 clubs, break down sitting on the chair.

"They break down, they get angry. I've had players tell me stuff they say they've never told anyone before as part of their healing, to clear it, deal with it and resolve it so they can move on."

One player told how his alcoholic father used to bash him and his mum, prompting him to rebel against authority, leading to his gambling.

Another player would start games well and then fizzle out, leaving his coaches perplexed as to why. It was eventually revealed that he was having flashbacks during the game of how much money he had lost during the week.

Another player was out of

form, suddenly found form and the media was lauding his turnaround.

"He and I used to have a chuckle. He'd say, 'You and I know why I'm playing a lot better,'" Mrs Beames says.

"A lot of players don't play to their potential because of gambling. Even though they might not be thinking about it, it's there all the time, and it's a massive burden to carry."

Another player sat in the chair on the Friday afternoon before playing in Round 11.

"The past couple of weeks he hasn't been playing great, but I think he did okay," she says, adding she is a type of coach. "I try to get them up for the game as well, I've got little techniques ... they've got a resource."

Mrs Beames watches all her players. "I don't watch the whole games, but I'm interested in them doing well because I care about them."

Worryingly, she urges her players to tell their clubs the extent of their problems, but says they are reluctant to.

Most players are referred to her by player managers.

"A lot of times, they are frightened, they don't want their club to know, they feel it would be used against them," she says. "These players are young, they might come from interstate, they're away, they're homesick, but they're not game to tell anybody."

Mr Beames says the program has to be separated from the clubs.

"It's a fragmented industry. Some of the player managers really don't know how to handle gambling. They're rolling out the money, but why are they letting these players gamble to the extent they are?" he says.

"There's a duty of care there that needs to be addressed as well.

"Some player managers have a deep understanding, there's some who have no idea. They say, 'Why don't you stop gambling,' without realising they have an addiction. It's an addiction without a drug."

Alleged gunman says sorry

ALLEGED Darwin shooter Ben Hoffmann declared he was "very sorry for what has happened" during his first court appearance.

Hoffmann, 45, appeared in Darwin Local Court by video link from Holtze Prison yesterday, flanked by two security guards, following the shooting deaths of four people on Tuesday night.

He wore a red prison-issued T-shirt and white footy shorts.

CRAIG DUNLOP

His face was covered in cuts and grazes.

When Judge Elizabeth Morris asked Hoffmann's lawyer, Peter Maley, whether his client should be marked an "at-risk" prisoner, Hoffmann interjected: "I do need help, I have asked for help.

"I'm very sorry about what has happened."

Mr said he had "some con-

cerns" about his client but did not have any medical records on which to base those concerns.

Crown Prosecutor Matt Nathan SC confirmed Hoffmann had been charged with four counts of murder, one count of criminal damage and two counts of aggravated recklessly endangering life.

Hoffmann will next appear in court by video link on September 18.



Ben Hoffmann

CYCLIST KILLED IN TRUCK HIT

A CYCLIST died after being hit by a truck in Bendigo yesterday afternoon, marking a deadly start to the Queen's Birthday long weekend.

Police said the male cyclist was knocked from his bike about 12.10pm by a truck heading south on Woodward Rd in the suburb of Golden Gully. He died at the scene.

It came after a male motorcyclist in his 30s died after crashing into the back of a car in Hampton Park on

Thursday afternoon. The fatal smash happened on Hallam Rd, about 4.45pm.

Victoria Police said the motorcycle slammed into the rear of the car as the car attempted a U-turn.

The deaths occurred amid a major road safety blitz for the long weekend. Operation Regal will run until 11.59pm Monday.

The state's road toll is 145, up from 89 at the same time last year.

SCOURGE

GOING FOR BROKE

PLAYER 1

Went to extreme lengths to keep the extent of his gambling from his partner. At a function, he kept going to the toilet to check the results of his "quaddie". The final leg won him \$95,000, but he just returned to the table and didn't tell anyone.

PLAYER 2

Current star saw six psychologists/counsellors to no avail. He lost about \$800,000 and had nothing to show for his career. His marriage was at a crossroads. It emerged there were some difficult family issues in his earlier life that had never been addressed.

PLAYER 3

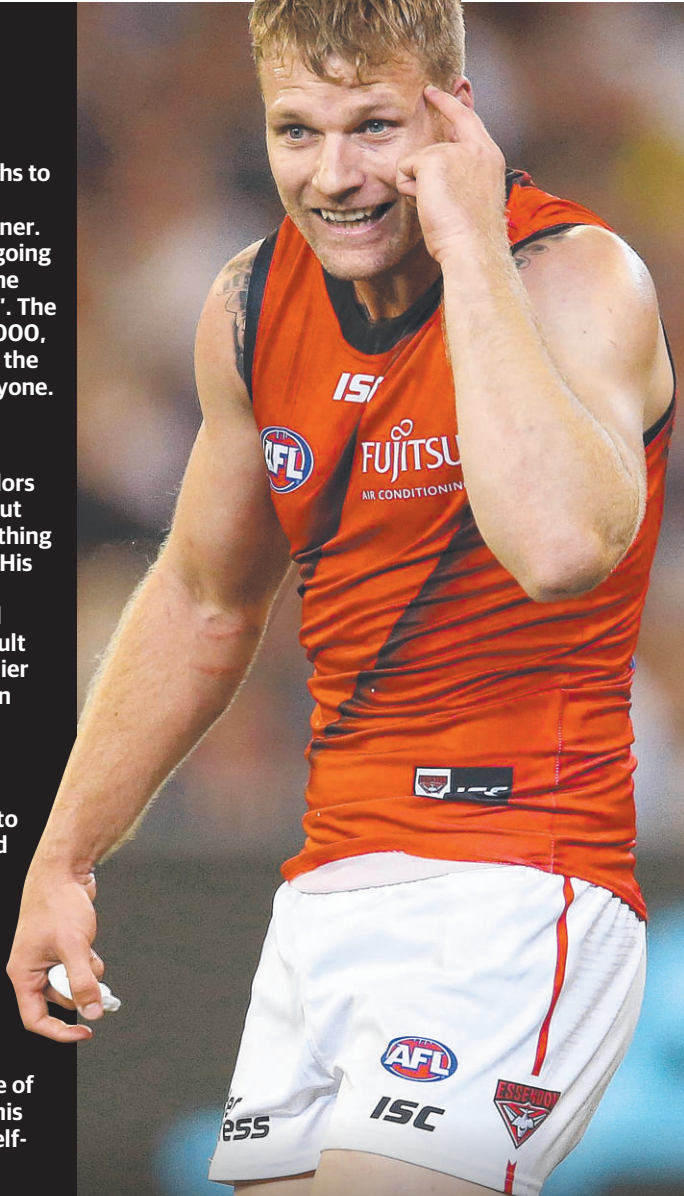
Young gun was simply told by a psychologist to avoid the local TAB and pick one day a week when he wouldn't gamble. His player manager then referred him to Jan Beames. It emerged he had severe anxiety about meeting his own expectations and those of others. Gambling was his way of releasing this self-imposed pressure.

PLAYER 4

Was sent to a psychologist who said she knew little about gambling after alerting the AFLPA that he had problems and, while he hadn't gambled for three months, was nowhere near "out of the woods". He left her rooms and went straight to the TAB. His gambling escalated until his manager referred him to Beames.

PLAYER 5

This country boy with a serious issue was told by an AFLPA-recommended psychologist that he needed to meditate. He never went back. There was no way this recommendation was going to work, Beames says.



As well as sorting out my gambling, she (Jan Beames) helped me resolve other areas of my life. This got me out of my depression

JAKE STRINGER



Trial aborted over news report

A BALLARAT murder trial has been aborted after just two days of evidence following "reckless" media coverage by a local TV station.

Justice John Champion yesterday discharged the 12-person jury from the case in the Supreme Court after he was alerted to the WIN News report.

He told the jury the news report aired on Thursday night "contained some material that

REBEKAH CAVANAGH

I thought was improper and should not have been made public".

"As a result of that information being conveyed into the public domain I've taken the view that that has offended the accused man's right to a fair trial," he said.

Ben Wardlaw, 40, was on trial over the murder of Karen Ashcroft, 52, at a Maryborough

home in regional Victoria in May last year.

Prosecutor Diana Piekusis opened the trial on Wednesday.

Evidence had been heard from eight witnesses.

The TV network could face contempt charges.

Mr Wardlaw was remanded in custody to appear via video link at the Supreme Court in Melbourne for a mention hearing on July 5.

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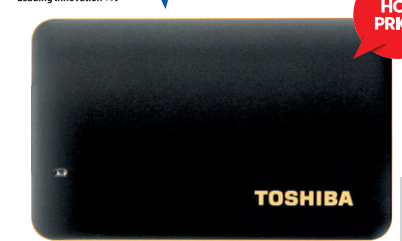


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