



Winning ways: Young footy fan Will with Cyril Rioli at the launch of *Fox Swift*. Picture: COLLEEN PETCH

Rioli opens new chapter of footy fame

AWTHORN star Cyril Rioli doesn't need the Australian Football Hall of Fame to become legend — he has been immortalised in a children's book.

"It's a big thing, it's really exciting," he said of his inclusion in *Fox Swift*, a chapter book for nine-to-12-year-olds.

"If I'd seen a book with an AFL layer on it when I was growing up, I would have read it."

Rioli joined 10-year-old Will, who plays for the Beaumaris Hawks and represents the titular character on the book's cover, at the Glenferrie Oval to

Blanche Clark
books editor

mark this week's book launch.

Written by comedian David Lawrence, *Fox Swift* is about an 11-year-old who joins the struggling Diggers football team after his family moves to the country.

Defeated and demoralised, the Diggers can't see how to beat the Dragons and win a premiership, until their coach convinces Rioli to mentor the team.

Rioli may have been sidelined for weeks with a hamstring injury, but in *Fox Swift* he's at

the top of his game and inspiring the Diggers to greatness.

He said the training drills and footy tips in the book were drawn from his school days and football career.

He admitted he wasn't much of a reader growing up, but hoped *Fox Swift* would encourage children, particularly in the Northern Territory and Tiwi Islands, to embrace books.

"I know a lot of kids read around Melbourne, but hopefully the book can get up in and around NT, where I'm from, and encourage them to read as well," he said.