

BOOK REVIEWS



Shock and awe . . . Collingwood and St Kilda players stand shellshocked after the drawn grand final of 2010.

Game hinged on a single bounce

The footy season may be over but there are plenty of books about for fans suffering withdrawal symptoms. Sports editor ROB SHAW reviews the latest offerings from the Slattery Media Group.

AS the 31 minutes and 51 seconds of the 2010 AFL grand final's final quarter reached its climax, the entire season rested on a single bounce of the ball.

Lenny Hayes kicked towards his St Kilda teammate Stephen Milne who seemed favourite to claim it from backtracking Collingwood defender Ben Johnson.

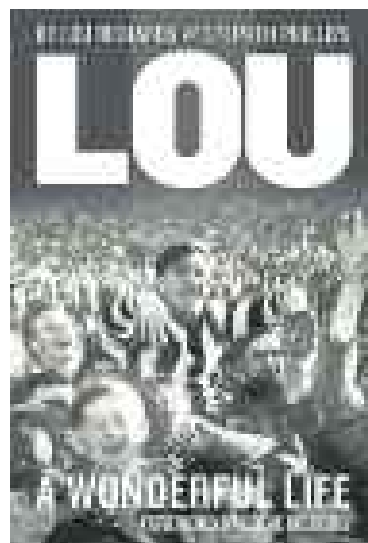
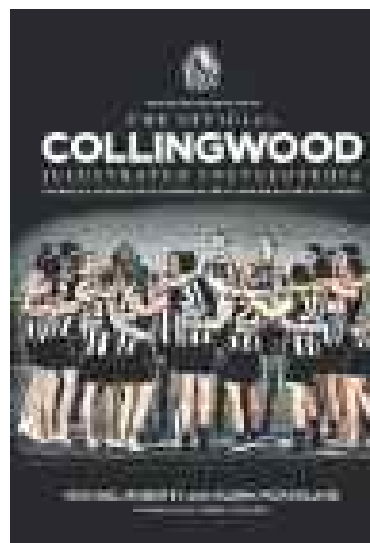
"If it bounced right for Milne, he could run in to kick the winning goal," recalls the latest account of that premiership-defining moment in **THE OFFICIAL COLLINGWOOD ILLUSTRATED ENCYCLOPEDIA** (\$59.95, by Michael Roberts and Glenn McFarlane).

"But . . . it bounced almost at right angles to trickle through for a behind in a spot eerily similar to where Barry Breen's famous point went through in St Kilda's one-point win over Collingwood in the 1966 grand final."

That behind levelled the scores at 10.8 (68) for the Saints to the Magpies' more wasteful 9.14 (68) but it was to be black and white rather than red, black and white that dominated the celebratory images a week later when the minor premiers made the most of their reprieve to win a one-sided replay by 56 points.

First published in 2004, this official club history has been updated to include this premiership plus Dane Swan's 2011 Brownlow Medal victory and the latest hall of fame inductees.

As flags had only come along once in the half century before 2010 for the league's best-supported club, it was probably necessary.



“No clearer evidence can be presented of the positive outlook of a man soon to turn 90 than Lou’s conclusion: ‘I’m looking forward to the next volume’”

LIKE the official club encyclopedia, **LOU — My Wonderful Life** (\$32.95, by Lou Richards with Stephen Phillips) is another updated version of a previous Slattery-Magpies release with an Eddie Maguire foreword.

In this case, it follows the 1989 best-seller *The Kiss of Death — Memoirs of a Sporting Legend* and the explanation given is to add the subject's successful media career to his renowned playing achievements.

From his birth in 1923 when, in his words, he made his "debut as a squawking ankle-biter", to his 250 games, 452 goals, 15 seasons and 1953 premiership with his beloved Collingwood and subsequent stardom on *World of Sport* and *The Footy Show*, this presents an endearing portrait of a character in black and white in every respect.

No clearer evidence can be presented of the positive outlook of a man soon to turn 90 than his

conclusion: "I'm looking forward to the next volume."

VOLUME I left us on the brink of both six years of world war and three years of Melbourne domination.

Much like *World War II, Grand Finals Volume II, 1939-1978* (\$39.95) of this series telling the stories behind the premier team of the Victorian Football League witnesses a change in the old guard.

The 40-year time span produces just two flags for the competition's early pacesetter Collingwood, memorable solitary wins for Footscray and St Kilda and the emergence of Hawthorn as the league benchmark.

It also saw the heyday of greats like Ron Barassi, Ted Whitten, John Coleman, Darrel Baldock and Peter Hudson plus a bloodbath, two ties, a crowd of 121,696 and, of course, "Jesaulenko, you beauty!"

And while South Melbourne may be noticeably absent from



High flyer . . . Alex Jesaulenko at the height of his powers.

the honour roll, editor and publisher Geoff Slattery makes the assurance: "Joy, for Swans fans, will come again in Volume III."

HOW'S this for a testimonial:

"His ball skills were at least the equal of Gary Ablett jnr's. He pack marked as well as Jonathan Brown. He was as evasive as Robert Harvey and as strong and balanced as Leigh Matthews. He was as courageous as Glenn Archer or Nick Riewoldt and was an inspirational captain."

The speaker is triple Brownlow medallist Ian Stewart and the subject his St Kilda teammate, and the club's only premiership-winning captain, Darrel Baldock.

Doubtless Peter Hudson — the third Tasmanian among the 24 legends inducted into the Australian Football Hall of Fame since its introduction in 1996 — would agree.

LEGENDS OF THE AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME (\$40, by Bruce Eva, Peter Ryan and Nick Bowen)

is the story of that double dozen featuring characters like Barassi, Cazaly, Dyer, Matthews and Whitten now so much a part of the game's fabric that their first names are virtually superfluous.

DEEP down, the ancient Greeks must have known they had forgotten something when they built the Parthenon.

Now we know what — two sets of footy goalposts, a floodlight tower and 10 Sherrins. In hindsight, it's amazing nobody pointed it out at the time.

FIND THE FOOTY (\$14.95) is an amusing kids' book, featuring 24 of the world's best-known landmarks adorned with photoshopped footy symbols, is as educational as it is entertaining.

Along with the simultaneous release of the **BUMPER FOOTY COLOURING BOOK** (\$9.95), it brings the nation's game to the nation's youth in a truly Australian way. And at least we now know why the tower of Pisa leans. It's all those footballs.