

# GARY ABLETT JR.

*Gary is the standout champion of the past 20 years - a beautifully balanced and skilful player who cuts through packs like he is on rollerskates.*

**SHEEDY SAYS**

**BORN 14 MAY 1984  
MORIAC, VICTORIA**



# BUDDY FRANKLIN

*He is truly exciting  
to watch - with speed,  
grace and balance I haven't  
seen matched in my more than  
50 years' involvement  
in elite footy.*

**SHEEDY SAYS**

**BORN 30 JANUARY 1987  
PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

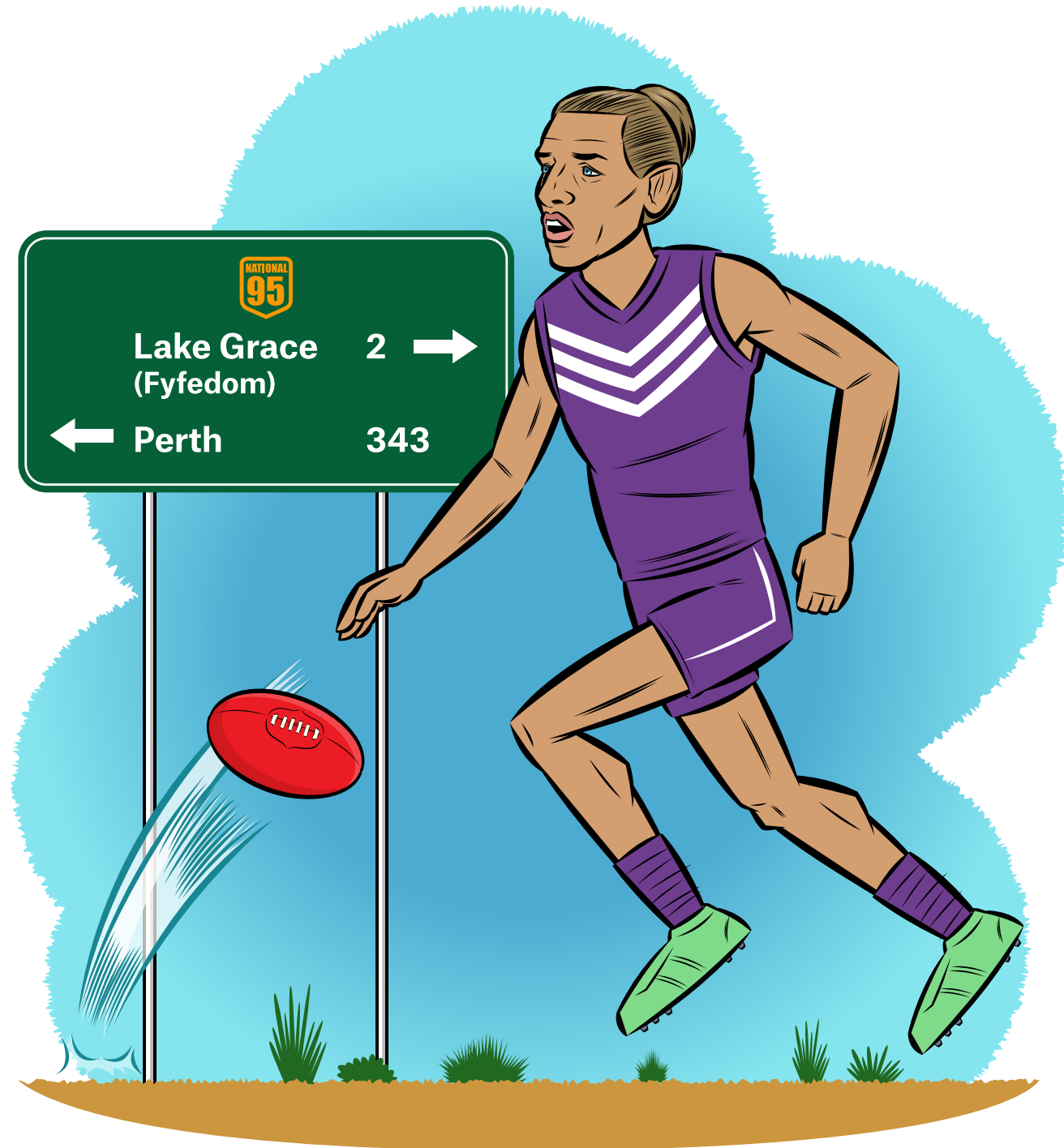


# NAT FYFE

*The heart of soul of the Fremantle footy club, Nat is a great guy and a wonderful player. What an impact a skinny kid from Lake Grace has made.*

**SHEEDY SAYS**

**BORN 18 SEPTEMBER 1991  
LAKE GRACE, WESTERN AUSTRALIA**



# DUSTY MARTIN

*Dusty has the amazing ability to get people to stop eating, stop talking, sometimes even stop breathing when he's in action.*

**SHEEDY SAYS**

**BORN 26 JUNE 1991  
CASTLEMAINE, VICTORIA**



# DAISY PEARCE

*Daisy was one of those players who just kept on impressing everybody, becoming one of the great players of the foundation years of AFLW.*

**SHEEDY SAYS**

**BORN 27 MAY 1988  
BRIGHT, VICTORIA**

Daisy, how did you go today?

You played well!



# JIM STYNES

## MELBOURNE DEMONS

Jim Stynes built a bridge between Australia and Ireland, in a sporting sense, that will never be broken. And so it's entirely fitting that there is now bridge in Melbourne, spanning the Yarra River, that bears his name.

Jim left Dublin aged 18 after responding to an ad in his local newspaper promising a university scholarship for anyone good enough to try their hand at Australian Rules football. Jim leapt at the chance (and kept on leaping). It was the outcome of another person's dream, that of legendary sports broadcaster Harry Beizel who pioneered the 'Irish experiment' to get promising Irish talent into our code. Jim Stynes was the beacon of that plan and 55 players have followed him from Ireland in the years since. There were 36 Irish men and women on AFL and AFLW lists in 2020.

But it was no bed of roses for young Jim when he moved to Australia. It must have been a great unknown and Ireland would have felt far away for him back in 1984. There were no mobile phones, no internet, no social media. Coming to Australia for Jim might have felt like he was going to the moon.

Jim found it hard to settle in at Melbourne Football Club, and everyone thought the experiment was doomed. Except Jim. He went to my old club, Prahran, in the VFA to learn the basics and after just one year at Prahran he became a star.

Jim had a style all his own. In his first game at Oakleigh, he kicked the ball to himself, the way they do in Gaelic football, and everyone, including the umpires just looked at him and thought, *What's going on?* He ran about a hundred metres without even bouncing it. Another time,

he was lining up for goal, approaching from a peculiar angle when his teammate said, 'Do you know what you're doing, mate?' Sure enough he kicked it through the middle. No story better sums up the idea that it's not where you're from, it's where you are going.

And where Jim was going was to legendary status with one of the most outstanding careers in Australian football history. He still has the record for playing the most consecutive games in AFL history, including a string of games he played with a broken hand. And he won the Brownlow medal, still the only person born outside Australia to achieve that. He went from not being wanted by Melbourne to becoming club president and holding that club together when there was a real fight for its survival. And now he has his statue outside the greatest sporting ground in the Southern Hemisphere. And a bridge. Think of Jim whenever you go over that bridge, and know that whatever obstacles you face in pursuing your dreams there are always ways to get over them.

