

Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr Colin Barnett; Acting Speaker; Mr John Kobelke; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Clive Brown;
Mr House; Mr John Hyde; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Norm Marlborough

JOHN TODD, CONTRIBUTION TO AUSTRALIAN RULES FOOTBALL

Standing Orders Suspension

DR GALLOP (Victoria Park - Premier) [10.09 am]: I move, without notice -

That so much of the standing orders be suspended as would enable consideration forthwith of a motion to congratulate John Todd for his contribution to football.

I trust that all sides of the House will agree with the suspension of standing orders. This matter could have been dealt with in a number of ways, but given the interest of many members of this House in the great Australian game, and their knowledge of the game and the contribution of John Todd, I felt that it would be appropriate to give all members an opportunity to contribute to this discussion. It is not often that this House moves to suspend standing orders in this way. However, it is an appropriate mechanism on this occasion to allow proper debate on this issue. The House rarely suspends standing orders and it is important that the issue be significant when it does. I am sure that on this occasion it is a significant matter.

MR BARNETT (Cottesloe - Leader of the Opposition) [10.10 am]: The Opposition will support the motion. It does so out of respect for John Todd and for the support that football has in this State. However, I want to make some comments about this matter.

The Premier is correct that this Parliament suspends standing orders on rare occasions. You might reflect, Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Andrews), on those occasions. Often they are when someone dies - that is important - as a mark of respect of this Parliament to that person. Fortunately, John Todd is in good health.

Members opposite snigger, but this is a Parliament. This Parliament also suspends standing orders when there is a crisis in the community and the Parliament may have to express its support or sympathy. Standing orders are suspended also when there is an issue of great importance to the operation of the Parliament itself, such as a matter concerning legislation or a contentious issue in the community.

I have the greatest of respect for John Todd. I do not know the man. I heard him on the radio the other day. I remember as a young boy seeing him play football against Subiaco. That may well have been, if not his last game, close to his last game. I, like other people, was dazzled with his skills and his ability to kick on either foot. He was a poised, most wonderful footballer. I admire his contribution to the game, his long history of coaching and the success he has achieved. He is a wonderful ornament to football and a wonderful Western Australian. However, the question is whether we suspend standing orders because he happens to be coaching his seven hundredth game this weekend. That is terrific but how does it compare with many other achievements? We must be very careful about suspending standing orders.

The Opposition will agree to suspend standing orders. I am sure our spokesperson on sport, the member for Dawesville, will have something to say, and possibly the member for Warren-Blackwood. We all know that John Todd grew up in Deanmill, came from a fairly humble background and became the great footballer he was and the great coach he is. If it is the Government's priority to discuss football this morning, we will discuss football. Mr Acting Speaker, why does the Government not do it properly? Why not get rid of the mace? Let us bring in an esky with a few VB beers, drop a screen, show some highlights, have some streamers and wear some footy caps? Are we going to do it or not? What is this about? Let us have a party and talk about John Todd's footy career for a couple of hours.

Mr Hyde: Talk to the motion to suspend standing orders.

Mr BARNETT: No; go away. I place on record that the Opposition will not oppose the suspension of standing orders.

Mr Hyde: Tedious repetition.

Mr BARNETT: Mr Acting Speaker, you have a job to do in the Chair; do it.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Andrews): I call the member for Perth to order.

Mr BARNETT: As I said, this side of the House will not oppose the suspension of standing orders. We are happy to express our congratulations and good wishes to John Todd for his distinguished playing career and his contribution to young people and his success as a coach, if that is the priority of this Government. How should the matter have been dealt with? If the Government wanted to acknowledge John Todd - that is a good thought - there are a number of ways of doing it. The Government should have simply made a brief ministerial statement this morning to recognise the achievements of John Todd or it could have used question time to do it.

Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr Colin Barnett; Acting Speaker; Mr John Kobelke; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Clive Brown;
Mr House; Mr John Hyde; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Norm Marlborough

That is what we will talk about for the next few hours - footy. We can talk about the career, the history, the games and we can have the attendants serve a few VBs and put some highlights up on a screen. We will do whatever the Government wants to do and talk footy for a couple of hours. That is fine by me. I love the game. I used to play it a bit, but not all that well. I am happy to talk about football, to recount my memories of John Todd and to pass on my congratulations to him. That is what the priority of the Labor Government is - to talk about John Todd on the occasion of his coaching his seven hundredth game. Will we do the same when Eagles and Dockers players reach their one hundredth or two hundredth game? I do not know. If that is what this Government regards as important debate for the time of this Parliament, so be it; we will talk footy for a couple of hours.

MR KOBELKE (Nollamara - Leader of the House) [10.14 am]: I speak in support of the suspension motion. It is a pity that the Leader of the Opposition has descended to petulance and grumpiness on what was an offer to the Opposition. The Premier, who is a keen follower of Australian Rules football, wished to make a statement. The suggestion was that the suspension of standing orders would give members on both sides - not just the Premier - an opportunity to make a short statement without holding up the business of the House to any great degree.

Standing orders are suspended from time to time. In fact, the last Premier, Premier Court, suspended standing orders to wish the West Coast Eagles luck in a grand final. I do not wish to delay the House. The offer to suspend standing orders to debate the motion of congratulations was made on the basis of giving only a small number of members on both sides of the House an opportunity to make a short contribution to the debate. We could do that with a suspension of standing orders.

Question put and passed with an absolute majority.

Motion

DR GALLOP (Victoria Park - Premier) [10.16 am]: I move -

That this House congratulates John Todd who this Saturday will have coached 700 games at South Fremantle, East Fremantle, Swan Districts and the West Coast Eagles and further applauds him for the contribution he has made to the game of Australian Rules football.

I congratulate a great Western Australian. Many things in our society interest our community in which it is passionately involved, and the great Australian game is one of those things. We are all part of that community. There are times when we must recognise those who have made a significant contribution to our community. John Todd is about as Western Australian as one can get and we are all very proud of his achievements. He was an extraordinary footballer who won the coveted Sandover Medal in his first season of football in 1955, aged just 17 years. We all know how he recovered from a shocking injury the next year to go on and play 132 games for South Fremantle and nine games for Western Australia. The courage he showed in coming back from that shocking injury was a mark of the man who still rates his 86-year-old mother Doris as the greatest influence on his life.

I never saw Toddy play before that horrific injury, but I am told by my chief of staff and Western Bulldogs loyalist, Sean Walsh, that he was "just like silk". However, I remember listening to the radio as the Western Australian team won the 1961 national championship. Toddy was in that team and was awarded all-Australian selection as a result. He was appointed coach of South Fremantle at age 20 and served that club for 172 games. He coached East Fremantle for 87 games and the West Coast Eagles for 45 games. He took the West Coast Eagles into their first finals in 1988. After last Saturday's game, he coached Swan Districts for 395 games. This Saturday will be his seven hundredth game. This is a significant achievement. Only three others in Australian Rules football history have achieved that - Jack Oatey, Jock McHale and the great Haydn Bunton junior. It is a significant achievement in a very important part of the Australian way of life - the great Australian game of football.

Under Todd, South Fremantle won a premiership in 1997, East Fremantle in 1974 and Swan Districts in 1982, 1983, 1984 and 1990. Members of this House would know of my passion for Swan Districts Football Club. I missed one of those premiership games but I remember it only too well. I was dutifully attending a seminar at Murdoch University on electoral and parliamentary reform. I remember it well because at the afternoon tea break Hon Hendy Cowan - another passionate Swan Districts supporter - got out a radio and we listened to that game, which saw Swan Districts take a premiership.

When those of us who are passionate about football think about the game, we link it with this great Western Australian who has played such a significant role. Let me put it in these simple terms: it is impossible to think or to talk about Western Australian football without talking about John Todd. He is not only a true football legend

Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr Colin Barnett; Acting Speaker; Mr John Kobelke; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Clive Brown;
Mr House; Mr John Hyde; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Norm Marlborough

but also a man who understands that life can be a battle. Well done Toddy! We applaud your contribution to the great Australian game, and wish you the best of health and happiness for your future.

MR MARSHALL (Dawesville) [10.20 am]: I too congratulate John Todd on his amazing achievement of reaching a 700-game coaching career. I will go back earlier in history than the Premier to 1954 when East Fremantle played in the grand final against South Fremantle. I mention that game also because it was one of the greatest disappointments of my life. It relates to one of the things that Todd carried on with in his career - that is, the hardening up of footballers. The coach at East Fremantle was Charlie Doig. I was coming back from injury, and although I thought that I should not be in the side, Charlie listed me in the newspaper to play. In those days 20 players were listed - 18 players and two reserves. He listed me as No 21, which had never been done before. I went to Charlie and said, "Look, I have not played enough games to be in this grand final." He said, "You could play. You're in this side; bring your togs." I went with the team in the bus. We had our Cully's pie. I was 18 years of age, and all this time I knew I would not be in the side. I ran out on the field with the team, which was a new thing in 1954. There was a crowd of about 25 000 and I was nervous. Everyone was talking about this 16-year-old kid who had just played in the seconds for South Fremantle and kicked seven goals; South Fremantle reserves had won the premiership. That kid was John Todd. The vibes were that if South Fremantle could win the reserves grand final it could win the league premiership. When Charlie announced the side, he said, "I'm sorry Arthur." I had to change and get back into my normal togs and go out and cheer the side on. That hurt. That was one of the most significant moments in my life. It was on that day in 1954 that I heard for the first time the name John Todd. I was devastated, even though I knew that commonsense dictated I would not be in the team. I refer to that, because unbelievably that was the tone of John Todd's coaching in his 700-game career. He has knocked players down; he has tested their resilience. One wonders why he would do such things to players. However, his methods have stood the test of time and have made him one of the most successful coaches in Western Australia.

The test of time determines a good coach. The definition of a good coach is simple: it is a person who, over a long time, can get superlative results, no matter the standard of the players in his team. They say that a coach is only as good as his team. However, a superb coach can rise above that definition, because he can make champions out of players who have limited ability. John Todd can look back over his career of 700 games knowing that he has not only formed champions out of players who did not have what it takes, but also made responsible members of the community out of players who were young and irresponsible. He did not always have this ability. He has learnt as he has gone along.

The first time that the name John Todd hit the press was in 1954 when he was 16 years of age. I did not dwell on my experience in the 1954 grand final. In 1955 and 1956 I played at Wimbledon. In 1957 I returned from the tennis circuit just in time to see East Fremantle win the grand final. After having lost 100 games in my league football career, I asked flippantly what had happened to John Todd. They said, "Don't you know? He's the youngest player ever to have won a Sandover Medal." In 1955 he played league football for South Fremantle. He was a superstar. Unfortunately, in his second year of football he received a bad knee injury and he played with a big kneepad. That had never happened before. From then on, when I went back to playing football, I used to see Toddy lumbering around. Although he had lost the brilliance that I missed seeing, he was still a great champion.

I am talking about his playing career, because it is important that members know how good a player this man was. We realised that at East Fremantle in 1958. We were back in the finals. Steve Marsh asked Toddy to come out and train with us. He was a South Fremantle player, and people in Fremantle were very territorial. I was fortunate in my football career to lead to two of the best passers in the game. When a player led to Jack Sheedy he had to brace himself. Whether it was a 10 or a 15-yard kick, Sheedy would kick it so hard that if a player did not brace himself and it hit his chest he would finish up in the back line. Players were a bit scared when they led to Jack Sheedy, because he would rake the ball through players. However, when players led to Steve Marsh, he would do dainty and delicate 10 or 15-yard kicks and players could take it in their stride, laid up as they marked the ball and think about where they would pass it as it was coming towards them. Those players never missed their marks. We were training with this kid, John Todd, with his big knee brace. We could lead 50 metres away from Todd, and on either his left or his right foot he could rake a drop kick that would hit players flat out on the run on the chest. I have never seen anyone kick like he did. I mentioned drop-kicks - I hope I am not dating myself.

Mr Barnett: Jimmy Conway was not bad either.

Mr MARSHALL: Jim Conway was terrific. We had to send him to Claremont to teach them how to play football. Jimmy Conway could screw kick; he could do everything. He was a master. They called him the professor and the wizard.

Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr Colin Barnett; Acting Speaker; Mr John Kobelke; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Clive Brown;
Mr House; Mr John Hyde; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Norm Marlborough

I do not think in those early days that John Todd thought he would be a coach. South Fremantle gave him the opportunity to be a playing coach. That was the beginning of his learning curve. He walked into the job of coach, and he was not that good. One might even say that he was a failure in his first year of coaching. However, as an enthusiast of the game he learnt from his experience in that year, and history shows that his career went from strength to strength.

As a player he was a champion. He played 132 games with South Fremantle, and nine with Western Australia. We tend to forget that he was a state player, an all-Australian player, footballer of the year and fairest and best for South Fremantle. As a coach he has done it all. He was a premiership coach with East Fremantle in 1974 and with Swan Districts - the Premier mentioned those gallant years at Swan Districts when he took them right to the top. He was the state coach from 1975 through the decades to 1998. The only reason he has not kept going with that is that no interstate games are being played at the moment, which is a tragedy for football. He has twice been all-Australian coach. He coached the Australian side that toured Ireland and won. He achieved everything that was possible as a coach. His coaching career followed on from his playing career.

When I was driving home last night I listened to an interview on the radio with one of the Fremantle Dockers. The interviewer referred to the loss of Damian Drum as the Dockers' coach. The player was asked what kind of coach the team was looking for and whether it should get a coach with playing experience. The young Docker said the team would like to have a coach with playing experience. Now, although any team can get a coach who tells players to do as they say and not as they do, it is the coaches who tell the players to do as they say because they have all the experience and have done it all before who rise to the top.

Although it is an honour for John Todd to be coaching his seven-hundredth game, he has been honoured throughout his career. He has been given life memberships of South Fremantle and Swan Districts Football Clubs, he is in the Western Australia Institute of Sport Hall of Fame and the Fremantle Docker's Hall of Champions, he is on the Fremantle Wall of Fame, and he has received the Advance Australia Award and also the Order of Australia in the Queen's honours list. Not many athletes and sports people in Western Australia can -

Mr Barnett: I am sure he will value the suspension of standing orders to go with all of those great honours.

Mr MARSHALL: Well, that is another honour. He has done it all. In my latter years I called football for Channel 7. I had about eight years teamed with Bob Miller. We always tried to get into the football change rooms before the games to familiarise ourselves with the players. One year, when Western Australia played Victoria, the players came out on the Friday night in their motley guernseys and we looked at them and said, 'No 12 is not a rover' because he was about six feet two inches tall. The clubs were trying to muck the commentators and the scouts about so they did not know who the players were. I asked Don Scott, who was a tennis player and Victorian captain at one stage, what was going on? He told us that the management would explain who the players were and then we were told that we could go into the rooms before the match the next day. David Parkin was the coach. The difference was notable between the players who trained the night before and players who were out to really play. The Victorians we had seen the night before with their jumpers hanging out were transformed into tanks in their shorts and tailor-made guernseys with the big-V on the front. They were he-men and professional footballers. We would look quickly to see which wrist was bandaged so that we could identify them during the call. We always tried to go into the change rooms, but not every coach would let us in. However, John Todd, who was a promoter of football, would always let us into the rooms provided we were out before the pep talk, otherwise we were locked in. Naturally, as commentators, we had to give the 15-minute preamble before the game. However, on one occasion when we went into the change room, we were a little overawed by Ron Boucher. Someone was holding a punching bag and Boucher was hitting the bag and knocking the bloke over and Toddy came over and said that Boucher was not hitting the bag hard enough! I forget who the player was now but imagine it was Geoff Gallop or someone like that whom Ron was getting into! This bloke Boucher was like a he-man or a robot knocking down the bloke who was holding the punching bag. We got so involved in talking to the players that the doors were locked and we had to listen to John Todd's pep talk. It is not often that one is privileged to listen to pre-match talks. We had heard pep talks at East Fremantle over the years, but John Todd's was special. He began in a quiet manner. He must have been in Parliament at one stage because it was a bit like Parliament. Members rant and rave sometimes and get overemotional or carried away, and then there is quiet, responsible discussion. He began his pep talk in a quiet, responsible way and then picked on one of the young players and cut him down a size. I thought, as a former coach, he should have been encouraging the young player to give him confidence and get him going. He then picked on someone else and ranted and raved, and then he told Boucher that he had to take the whole side out and they ran onto the field. He then finished with his tactical talk. The speech went on for 32 minutes - we timed it. He then quietened down and when every player went through the door, he spoke to him. Of course, the Swan Districts in those days were a unit and they went on to win that match.

Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr Colin Barnett; Acting Speaker; Mr John Kobelke; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Clive Brown;
Mr House; Mr John Hyde; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Norm Marlborough

Since then I have seen John Todd mellow. He is not as explosive as he used to be and he has learnt things along the way and kept up with all the other influences on the sport; for example, sports psychology, sports science, biomechanics, tactics and the effect of different grounds on the match. He has kept pace with modern sport, which a lot of older coaches have forgotten, and they then lose it.

In honouring John Todd today, I believe we honour a man who has done it all. I have told members about his playing record and his coaching record, and how he has been more honoured, probably, than any other sports person in WA. However, he has also survived the test of the time and he is still promoting football, the love of his life, and doing it just as well today, if not better, then when he started. That is a testimony to a person who knows what he believes in and is doing great things for this State and for the game of football. Therefore, I congratulate John Todd for his seven-hundredth game on Saturday.

MR BROWN (Bassendean - Minister for State Development) [10.36 am]: I support the remarks of the Premier in paying tribute to a great player, a great coach and a great person and thank him personally for his contribution to the Swan Districts Football Club, which is in my electorate.

MR HOUSE (Stirling) [10.37 am]: On behalf of the National Party, I join the Government and the Opposition in congratulating John Todd on his career and achievements and for what has been a wonderful contribution to a game that we all acknowledge and support and take a lot of pleasure in.

Unlike the Opposition spokesman on sport and recreation, I have not had the privilege of playing the great Australian game at the level that he has but I understand from what I have been able to see and read that there are differences in people's achievements at different sporting levels. John Todd has certainly made a huge contribution to not only sport, but also the development of young people and it is on that subject that I want to spend a couple minutes today.

Speaking as someone who represents a rural electorate, as many of us do in this Parliament, sport is the lifeblood of many rural communities. It is the gel that brings us together and the glue that binds us when times are tough. It is the footy clubs, the hockey clubs, and the basketball clubs in all the little country towns, and their supporters, coaches and administrators, and the ladies who make the sandwiches and tea and who put on the barbecue at night as well as the social events, which bind many communities together. That sportsmanship, comradeship and working together has been the making of many of the characters of rural Western Australia. It has allowed many country communities to progress and it has developed community leaders. Many people who have achieved on the sporting field have gone on to become leaders of their communities and other areas. While many of us did not excel in the sports that were played in rural Western Australia, we were taught a lot about character, leadership and understanding by playing those sports. The coaches of those sports who came to the country from the city taught us a heck of a lot and they themselves were taught by people like John Todd. Although I acknowledge and celebrate John Todd's achievements, I also acknowledge and pay tribute to all the young people who have benefited from playing in sporting teams around rural Western Australia, and to the coaches and the people who have guided them to future and greater achievements in other walks of life. Their understanding of and involvement in sport have made an outstanding contribution to the development of our society in a way that would probably not have happened in any other circumstance. On behalf of all the people who have benefited from the experience of being involved in sport and who have enjoyed watching and understanding it, and whose characters and communities were developed by their involvement in sport, I congratulate those people today.

MR HYDE (Perth) [10.40 am]: Anyone who has coached sport would be in awe of somebody who can achieve the tremendous milestone of 700 games at the highest level. John Todd personifies why the Western Australian Football League is so important to the culture of Western Australia. A number of members - the member for Pilbara, the member for Stirling, the member for Warren-Blackwood, the member for Armadale, the member for Midland and me - are very ardent, strong Royals supporters and so, for us, Toddy is the opposition. I acknowledge that the Premier and the member for Merredin mistakenly follow the Swan Districts Football Club. However, although we might be members of the opposition when it comes to WAFL, we all acknowledge Toddy's tremendous work and what he has brought to the game in this State. My dad was captain-coach of Claremont Football Club in the 1950s and played against Toddy. He tells some awesome stories of the talent of Toddy. The Geelong Football Club quickly received word that Todd was somebody the Victorian Football League should very quickly recruit. Tomorrow will be a tremendous achievement for him. We at East Perth Football Club are very glad that it did not occur last week, when we played the Swans, because it might have got them over the line. Toddy was not able to get a victory in his six-hundred-and-ninety-ninth game, but we hope that in his seven-hundredth, Swan Districts supporters and, indeed, all Western Australians can join in helping him get over the line and celebrate in true Western Australian style.

Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr Colin Barnett; Acting Speaker; Mr John Kobelke; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Clive Brown;
Mr House; Mr John Hyde; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Norm Marlborough

MR OMODEI (Warren-Blackwood) [10.41 am]: I join members of the House in congratulating John Todd on his seven-hundredth game. John Todd grew up at Dean Mill in its early days, which, as members know, is one of the major mills in the south west of the State, and probably one of the most modern mills in the Southern Hemisphere. The other famous person to come out of Dean Mill - he was not born there but was a teacher at the school - is Sir Ross Hutchinson, who was a Speaker of the Legislative Assembly in Western Australia and who played football for Jardee, rather than Dean Mill. Jardee later amalgamated with Fire Brigades in Palgarup, which is just north of Manjimup, to create the Tigers Football and Sporting Club. Other notable people who came from that area in the early days are Dobby Graham, a champion East Perth footballer; Charlie "Jarrah" Walker, who played centre half-back for the State; Tom Everett; Ray Giblett; Doug Bames, who played for East Fremantle; Paul Peos, a West Coast Eagles and Teal Cup star; and the Kelly brothers, who were born in Pemberton and played in Busselton before coming to Perth. We also had local champions in John Turner and Harvey Giblett, who coached Dean Mill and Southerners, which is, of course, my home team. I am currently the President of the Southerners Football Club, although I am not sure how I got conned into that.

The rivalry in that area was immense. Having grown up around Dean Mill, I understand how John Todd became a champion footballer. Often at this time of the year, water runs down either side of the road on the way to the Dean Mill ground. When I played in the late 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s, the ground usually contained at least six inches of mud. If a young kid was running the boundary, a reserve would often have to come on as the young kid would run out of puff on the boggy ground. I understand how John Todd was able to develop the skills with his left and right feet and become a famous Australian, let alone Western Australian, football player and coach.

John Todd and Mick Cooper, from Swan Districts Football Club, went to Manjimup two weeks ago to talk to the kids in the schools. They later went to the Dean Mill workers club, and one can imagine the stories that went back and forth in that bar. There would have been no holds barred. I mention the great rivalry that exists in the lower south west football league, which usually plays in the B section of the Wesfarmers carnival. In 1970, the combined team from lower south west defeated the team from the South West Football League in the A section of the Wesfarmers carnival. Many famous players have come out of the area. The fact that John Todd went back to the area a couple of weeks ago is an indication of the type of person he is. He had the respect to go back to his roots to teach the young kids and to impart to them some of his knowledge. Members can imagine their awe of this person, who has had such a famous career. The rivalry between the mill towns in the lower south west football league has no peer. During the days I played, if one walked down the streets of Manjimup and saw an opposition player, one turned one's head the other way. The old Dean Mill clubrooms were fantastic. Nowadays clubrooms are characterised by stainless steel equipment. In the old days, we hung our gear on four-inch nails, and on a wet day, the oval was covered in large patches of water. It was pretty rugged.

The mill town derby has been developed in recent times. The Southerners Football Club draws from the towns of Pemberton, Northcliffe and Quinninup. Over the years a number of players have come to the area through either the education system or the Department of Conservation and Land Management. We have always had very good players. The rivalry between Dean Mill and Pemberton has resulted from the influence of those early players like John Todd. Since 1959, Southerners has won 13 grand finals and Dean Mill 12. This year, Dean Mill is on the top of the ladder. Heath East has just come back from East Perth Football Club and the club has recruited Craig Giacomel. The team is well and truly clear on the ladder. Of course, we at Southerners will do everything in our power to make sure Dean Mill does not win. Last Sunday we beat it by five goals at Dean Mill oval. Come finals time in the lower south west football league, it will be on for young and old. The mill town derbies are a focal point. The game is played on Saturday instead of Sunday, and starts very early in the morning. There is usually a luncheon, with a guest speaker such as a former famous player or local identity, for life members and supporters of the two clubs. A very good time is had by all. There is sponsorship of \$500 for the day and the game is played in good spirit. I am proud to say that the Southerners Football Club has won four of the last five derbies. I have a horrible feeling that Dean Mill does not like that very much, and is on the way up. It won the derby this year in great style.

Football is a great game for young people. It teaches comradeship, loyalty and a sense of depending on one's team-mate. It is a good training ground. I was certainly not a star footballer, but I played for about 20 years and coached juniors and seniors. In those days, farmers worked in the summertime. We did not get to play cricket, tennis or any other game played in summer, but we played football in the winter. Dad would not let us train until two weeks before the season. However, all the people we played against have become great friends and allies, even in my political career. It was tremendous to see John Todd come back a couple of weeks ago. Mick Cooper played for Swans and is now president of that club. He was born in Pemberton. Members can imagine the stories that were told when they came back. I congratulate John Todd. He has been a great sportsman and

Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr Colin Barnett; Acting Speaker; Mr John Kobelke; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Clive Brown;
Mr House; Mr John Hyde; Mr Paul Omodei; Mr Norm Marlborough

icon in Western Australia, and it gives me a great deal of pleasure to claim some ownership of him in that he grew up and started his career in the bush at Dean Mill. I wish him all the best for the future.

MR MARLBOROUGH (Peel - Parliamentary Secretary) [10.50 am]: I arrived in Australia as a 17-year-old in 1963 from the United Kingdom. I arrived with my parents and I was the eldest of six children. Having a United Kingdom background, the sports I grew up with were soccer, rugby league, rugby union and cricket. My soccer team of birth, having come from the north east of England, is Sunderland Football Club. My father was in the British Army and the family travelled overseas a lot. Whenever the family was in England it was based in Yorkshire. In those days Yorkshire had only two teams in the first division on a regular basis, one being Leeds United and the other being a Sheffield team. Rugby league was the main sport and it was a game that I loved and played. I played in the position of hooker at Joseph Rowntree High School, just outside York. I joined the British Army as a 15-year-old and was stationed in Carlisle in the Lake District, just eight miles from Gretna Green over the Scottish border. In the British services, rugby league was not allowed to be played. Rugby union is seen as the elite rugby game, and none of the three services allowed rugby league. All those who had any ability at rugby league quickly became good rugby union players. We were able to sidestep and the union players were not used to that. It was with that background that I arrived in Australia with a great appreciation of all sports.

After arriving in 1963, I quickly became involved with the Britannia soccer club. The member for Dawesville will recall that the club used to share a ground with the East Fremantle Tricolore soccer club in Preston Point Road. The tennis courts were adjacent to the ground. As a 17-year-old, I played one or two first division seasons for the Britannia club. I remember playing at Azzurri's ground and getting my name in the paper. Soccer was my great love. Halfway through my second season I got injured. I ended up watching my first Australian rules game. I was doing my apprenticeship at Chamberlain's and all my workmates were Australians. My workmates were teasing me for 12 months as to why I was playing a game where people kicked the ball with their head and why I was not playing Australian rules football. Chamberlain's had a team in the Sunday competition. I saw my first game of Australian rules football at East Fremantle Oval in 1964; it was a derby between East Fremantle and South Fremantle. I knew little about the game, but as far as team sports are concerned, and regardless of the rules, one can always pick players of outstanding quality and skill. It comes naturally to the eye to see a player who is ahead of the field. John Todd was not playing in that game but it did include two things that became prominent in my life in Australia. One was South Fremantle with its red and white colours, which reminded me of the colours of Sunderland, my home team. South Fremantle became my team. There was no doubt. On that day, there were two outstanding players. One was Gary Scott, who played on the ball, and was an outstanding footballer. From the first game I saw I realised that it was a great game and that it was a spectator sport second to none. I quickly became a member of the South Fremantle Football Club and I am still a member. Since that first game I have followed the game avidly and watched South Fremantle play every Saturday.

John Todd was injured as a 16-year-old. It was early in his career. He first started playing for South Fremantle and eventually won the Sandover Medal. I think he came from the Hilton football club along with John Gerovich. John Todd was coaching South Fremantle by the time he was 20 years old. He stopped playing very early in his career. I recall John being based on Rottnest Island as a butcher, which is his profession. He is still remembered by many people in Fremantle, not only for his football skills but also for his role as the local butcher. People loved going to John's butcher shop. People in Fremantle knew him as a great sportsman and a great family man. He loved his parents and was very close to the rest of his family. I have got to know his brother Bill very well over the years. He is now a police inspector.

When John came back from Rottnest Island in 1965, I had the opportunity to see what I regard as poetry in motion. I think of John Todd as the finest footballer I have seen, albeit that he had a very short career. I mentioned my background in the United Kingdom because as soon as I saw him play, I thought of his counterparts in soccer. As a 10-year-old, I used to stand on the terraces at Sunderland Football Club with my uncle Norman and watch great soccer players. I remember Brian Clough when he was centre forward for Sunderland; Charlie Hurley when he was the best centre half back in the world and captain of Eire; and Len Shackleton, the crown prince of soccer, who was not capped enough for England and who went on to become a great scribe in the local papers on soccer for many years. They were all Sunderland players.

I saw great soccer players from other teams. In the 1950s, I remember seeing the greatest soccer player of all time, Sir Stanley Matthews. In respect of his skills and abilities, I regard John Todd as the Sir Stanley Matthews of Australian rules football. I have often compared John Todd with Barry Cable. Barry Cable was a great footballer and someone who trained very hard, trained long and played to his strengths. He maximised his abilities. John Todd did all that and had natural ability. Todd was the Nureyev of football; he was the Pavarotti of football; he was the Sir Stanley Matthews of football; he could do anything. In addition to his skills, he had

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amazing heart and courage. I remember one game at South Fremantle when they were playing East Perth and Mal Atwell decided that the best way to deal with Todd on the field was to do him maximum damage and get out of the game as quickly as possible. They could not match his skills. Atwell was determined to do that. I remember Colin Beard kicking the ball from full back. Todd ran toward the ball while Atwell and three other players were ready to nail him. Todd ran toward the ball and controlled the pace of the opposition players by his speed. He slowed down and the ball came toward him. He could have marked the ball but he allowed it to hit the ground and as it bounced up he flicked it over the heads of the three opposition players who were behind him. He went around the players and gathered and kicked the ball, and it hit John Gerovich on the chest from 70 metres. It was magnificent. He always had those skills.

Mr Marshall: It was not 70 metres.

Mr MARLBOROUGH: It absolutely was 70 metres, and I am six foot two! The kick was 70 metres and was marked straight on the chest. Like all players with exquisite skills, if he had a weakness - as a coach Toddy had a slight weakness - it was that he believed everybody should be able to play like he did, but, of course, they could not.

I remember going to a pre-season game in 1965 or 1966 between two teams of South Fremantle players at Bruce Lee Oval. Graham Reilly was a young full back who went on to play state football. Unfortunately, in his late 20s or early 30s he died from a brain tumour. Todd coached one of the teams that played in that game and I can remember how competitive he was. During that pre-season game he went onto the field and had a punch up with Graham Reilly - his own player! I squeezed into the Bruce Lee rooms at half time and heard Todd make it clear to Graham that, even though it was only a practice game, if he wanted to continue to play for South Fremantle, he needed to lift his standards. His love of football and Western Australians is a credit to the man.

Mr Barnett: When did you come to Australia?

Mr MARLBOROUGH: I came to Australia in 1963. The Leader of the Opposition does not think that I saw Todd play football.

Mr Barnett: I am curious about when you watched him play.

Mr MARLBOROUGH: He came back from Rottnest in either 1964 or 1965.

Mr Barnett: His curriculum vitae says that he retired as a player in 1962.

Mr MARLBOROUGH: That is not right. The CV says that he retired from football well before I arrived in Australia from England. The Leader of the Opposition must have been here at the time. Does he not remember? That is the problem with people who played for Claremont - they do not have good memories. They have nothing much to remember.

Mr Barnett: I am trying to get the dates right because I saw him play too, and I saw his comebacks. Was it in 1964? When do you think he played his last game?

Mr MARLBOROUGH: The Leader of the Opposition is a bit younger than I; he would have been playing marbles and had other things on his mind. Todd came back from Rottnest in about 1965. The Leader of the Opposition is now trying to tell me that I never saw him play at all and that I have made all of this up!

Mr Barnett: It was a fair question.

Mr MARLBOROUGH: It is a fair question. I can inform the Leader of the Opposition that the CV is inaccurate. Todd came back and played for South Fremantle. He lived on Rottnest Island and worked as a butcher.

Mr Barnett interjected.

Mr MARLBOROUGH: That is right, but it did not say that in 1962. The Leader of the Opposition cannot read right. The CV does not show that he retired as a footballer in 1962.

Mr Barnett: It says he retired after 162 games.

Mr MARLBOROUGH: That is right. The member should read some history books. I am clear in my mind about the time I saw Toddy play for South Fremantle, and the interjections from the Leader of the Opposition do not detract from the fact that Todd was a great player. It is a credit to him that, because of his love of football, he has coached almost 700 games and I hope that he coaches another 700 games. He has been a credit to this State, his family and the South Fremantle Football Club. Over the many years of involvement in Western Australian football, John Todd has given us all a great deal of enjoyment. I hope that he continues to be involved in coaching for many years to come.

Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr Colin Barnett; Acting Speaker; Mr John Kobelke; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr Clive Brown;
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MR BARNETT (Cottesloe - Leader of the Opposition) [11.15 am]: I also wish John Todd well and congratulate him on this achievement and acknowledge his outstanding, albeit short, career as a footballer, and his long and successful career as a football coach. I have a distant memory that, as a young boy, my father took me to Subiaco Oval to watch John Todd play. I will check some of the facts because I do not know whether that game at Subiaco Oval was his last game, but it was close to one of the last games he played. At that time, John Todd had a legendary status. He was the prince of footballers in every sense. I had always wanted to see that great player in action. Dad took me to Subiaco Oval and there was great excitement because this was one of the many comebacks that the legendary John Todd had made. I recall that he wore a heavy knee brace that must have been difficult to run with, let alone to play football. I admire the ability of footballers to kick the football because I was not the most poised kick then or later when I continued to play. As the member for Dawesville said, Todd had extraordinary skills. He had an almost majestic and poetic ability to kick with either his left or right foot. At that game at Subiaco Oval, John Todd would take a mark and do a beautiful right foot drop kick - I doubt that the football went 75 metres, but it was probably 55 or 60 metres - and he could also kick an equally beautiful left foot drop kick. I was in absolute awe of such skills. During that game, as often happened in his career, he was cleaned up. It could well have been by Dennis Barron - I do not know whether I should ascribe that to Dennis - who had a habit of cleaning up footballers. If remember rightly, in that game John Todd either broke down or was injured again, which frequently happened, and was carried off the ground. If it was not his last game of football, it was close to it.

He was an outstanding player and character. He committed himself to provide excellence and encouragement to young people. Like most coaches in sporting arenas, he not only provided players with the process of competing and winning games, but also adopted a strong leadership role of the young men during those periods of development. I congratulate John Todd and wish him well. He has been a great credit to the game of football in Western Australian; indeed, he is a great Western Australian.

Question put and passed.