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Sport Footy Columnists

AFL should lead in player safety

| September 14th, 2011

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PAINFUL BLOW: Geelong young gun Daniel Menzel is escorted from the field with a knee injury last Friday night.

THE first week of the finals is complete. Last Friday night we earned a chance to have this coming weekend off, by defeating one of our great modern day rivals, Hawthorn.

The weekend off is only a term I use to refer to the fact we won't be playing a game of football. We will still be training hard up until our next game. We have plenty of things to do and time to tune.

Keeping the week as close to normal routine as possible from an individual and teams perspective is important. I certainly won't be doing much out of the ordinary this week. Keeping focused and relaxed at the same time is my main goal.

Experience has afforded me the benefit of knowing how to do this best for me. Playing golf, watching NFL and

College football and meandering around the aisles of Bunning's will help me find that balance between focused and relaxed.

Last Friday night's game was intense and the fans were treated to a game full of momentum shifts and great marks.

Trent West's hanger late in the game was one the best I have seen. There were many highlights to come out of the game, but there were also a few lowlights.

Daniel Menzel's and Buddy Franklin's knee injuries occurred in stark contrast to the high marks and great goals. These injuries are a frank reminder of how the game of AFL can quickly change the direction of your life.

Menz has been in great form for us over the last few weeks and was having a big impact in the game up until his injury occurred.

He was set to provide our team with a real spark during the final series. His knee injury has been repaired and he would already be saddling up for the ride on the long road of recovery that you must face with ACL injuries. He is a very determined young fella who will only grow from his time on the sidelines.



TRAGIC DEATH: Bacchus Marsh youngster Nathan Prince suffered a heart attack on field recently.

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I have no doubt he will come back as an even better AFL player and like many of you, wish him all the best during his recovery.

Knee injuries are a terrible part of our game. You can do all of the preparation possible but sometimes ligaments just let go.

Knee injuries are bad but they can be fixed and life goes on. If you were to suffer a heart attack on the football field, the pain of a knee injury would seem like an insignificant story. Recently a heart attack caused the death of Nathan

Prince, a promising junior footballer for Bacchus Marsh. Your heart stopping is a serious situation. Every minute thereafter becomes vital. Your chance of survival decreases by 10 per cent after every minute from the time of the incident. After 10 minutes your chance of survival becomes very low. Stretchers and braces are present at nearly all football games but they are of little use when your heart stops beating.

A defibrillator on the other hand is the must have piece of equipment. They are simple to use and they save lives. It should be customary that every sporting club in Australia have a defibrillator at their disposal.

The AFL needs to set the standard for Australian sport and help arm every football club in the country with a defibrillator.

The government needs to get on board as well to help prevent the deaths of some of our countries young sportspeople, should a heart attack strike.

The Victorian Country Football League assists with a subsidy for the cost of a defibrillator for all Victorian country football clubs.

Geelong's Buckleys Entertainment group has provided 36 defibrillators to football clubs in the Barwon region.

Andrew White began a program called Defib your club for life and is campaigning to have a defibrillator in each of the 750 football clubs across regional Victoria.

They cost about \$2000. In the past two years deaths have occurred on football ovals at Gisborne, Silvan, Moulamein, Woorinen, Maryborough and Werribee.

For many football clubs \$2000 is a lot of money to spend but when you are dealing with someone's life price should never be an issue.

The AFL wishes to continue to grow our great game. Junior football clubs are the roots that provide the nourishment for the fruit of the games future. Helping clubs buy a defibrillator might not boost participation levels or help sway young kids to pick up a football instead of a soccer ball, but it might just help save one more life.

It might just help a young star's heart, like that of Nathan Prince, beat normally again so he can to continue to prosper alongside our great game.

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