

All Stars Return

After a two year absence, the Indigenous All-Stars are back to take on the AFL's best.

Nothing gets the local people in Darwin quite as excited as a football match, especially when that football match involves the most high profile Indigenous sporting team in the country – the Indigenous All-Stars.

The All-Stars made their debut back in 1994 when they played Collingwood in a game devised by the club as a gesture of reconciliation at a time when the race issue came to a head in Australian sport.

Then coached by Maurice Rioli and captained by Michael McLean, the original All-Stars defeated Collingwood in a hard-fought match that saw a final score of 88 to 68.

It was almost 10 years before the All-Stars returned, this time in a match against Carlton in 2003, when they put on an electrifying display en-route to a big win.

In 2005, in their game against the Western Bulldogs, the All-Stars again ran out big winners, doing it in style and entertaining the crowd with their speed and athleticism.

For their fourth match, to be held this month, the boys in black, red and yellow take on Essendon. The team will again be coached by AFL legend Michael McLean and will see a line-up of some of the best Indigenous talent in the AFL.

Taking place on February 9, the "Once in a Dreamtime" match is expecting to attract more than 15,000 spectators to TIO Stadium in Darwin.

"For the players of both teams, this is a once in a life-time opportunity that they will remember forever," says All-Star selector and AFL legend Michael Long.

"I'd encourage every fan of our great Australian game to see the magic and feel the spirit of a very unique event on Australia's sporting and cultural calendar."

Like Michael, former Brisbane and Footscray player Michael McLean has been heavily involved with the All-Stars since their very first match and is looking forward to coaching the team for the third time.

"It's a special time for everyone, including the next group of players," Michael says. "It's healthy for our people, local footy and the promotion of the game."

Over the years, Essendon coach Kevin Sheedy has been a strong supporter of raising the profile of Indigenous football and the development of the game in Indigenous areas and is delighted to be a part of the Bombers team set to take on the All-Stars.

"It's a fantastic opportunity for our club to be going up north," Sheedy says. "We can play a role in developing the talent up north and ensuring the belief remains that they can make it to the big time."

With four Indigenous players from Darwin selected in the last draft as well as two more being rookie listed, the All-Stars match only furthers the footy fanaticism in a territory that has become one of the AFL's great breeding grounds.

A curtain raiser before the match will be staged between the Qantas AFL Indigenous Youth Team and the South African Under 19s. Both teams met in a series of matches early in 2005 during the historic Indigenous Youth Team Tour of South Africa, from which five players have since been drafted into the AFL.



The All-Stars huddle before the 2003 match against the Carlton Blues.





ACTIVITY 1: PREPARATION BEFORE READING

This report tells us that after two years, the AFL Indigenous All-Stars team will form again to play against Essendon in Darwin on February 9.

The first Indigenous All-Stars game was played against Collingwood in 1994 as a gesture of reconciliation. It allowed Indigenous players to publicly assert themselves and their Aboriginal pride against racism on and off the field of play and to promote a greater awareness of the game's Aboriginal heritage.

Other All-Stars games have been played against Carlton in 2003 and Western Bulldogs in 2005. The All-Stars have won all three of these games so far.

Former Brisbane and Footscray player Michael McLean will coach the All-Stars for the third time. AFL legend Michael Long is a selector for the team.

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1. According to this report, which team will the Indigenous All-Stars play against?

2. Where will the match be played?

3. Who coached the original match in 1993?

4. Which Essendon coach has been a strong supporter of the All-Stars games for a long time?

5. Write two reasons that the All-Stars games are a positive move for the AFL.



ACTIVITY 3: INDIGENOUS ALL-STARS SQUAD

Team	Players
Adelaide	Andrew McLeod, Graham Johncock
Brisbane	Chris Johnson
Carlton	Eddie Betts
Collingwood	Chris Egan
Essendon	Andrew Lovett, Nathan Lovett-Murray, Courtney Dempsey, Richard Cole, Patty Ryder, Leroy Jetta, Alwyn Davey
Freemantle	Jeff Farmer, Troy Cook, Andrew Grover, Roger Hayden, Des Headland
Geelong	Mathew Stokes, Travis Varcoe, Nathan Djerrkura, Liam Bedford
Hawthorn	Mark Williams, Lance Franklin, Chance Bateman
Kangaroos	Daniel Wells
Melbourne	Aaron Davey, Bryon Pickett
Port Adelaide	Shaun Burgoyne, Peter Burgoyne, Danyle Pearce, Daniel Motlop
Richmond	Richard Tambling, Andrew Krakouer
Sydney	Adam Goodes, Michael O'Loughlin
Southern Districts (NTFL)	Darryl White
West Coast	David Wirrpanda
Western Bulldogs	Cameron Faulkner

Coach: Michael McLean

- How many players are drawn from the Essendon team? _____
- Name the two players from Sydney who are in the All-Stars team.

- Which team does Darryl White play for in the Northern Territory Football League (NTFL)?

FURTHER RESEARCH:

To read more about the AFL Indigenous All-Stars, head to:

www.aboriginalfootball.com.au/allstars