

Touch of the (captaincy) fumbles

TOM RICHARDSON | 15 JANUARY 2015



Taylor Walker and teammates deep in Manversation.

AFL | What follows are the official minutes of this week's meeting of the Adelaide Football Club leadership group with coach Phil Walsh.

WALSH: Right fellas, let's have this out and then get on with it, because that's what we do at this footy club.

I've appointed a new captain.

RORY SLOANE: Well done, NVB. Never in doubt.

(Awkward silence)

WALSH: No, it's not Nathan. He's decided he needs to concentrate on getting his body right this year.

VAN BERLO: Actually, coach ... the Achilles is fine. I'm raring to go.

WALSH: When I say 'he's decided', what I mean is 'I've decided'. That's how we do business here.

SLOANE: Wow. Congrats then, Danger. Worthy appointment.

WALSH: It's not Paddy either. How's it gonna work with a captain still refusing to sign on for next year? We're about players who are totally committed to the team. That's how we do things. That's the Phil Walsh way.

SCOTT THOMPSON: Fair enough, we did win more games under Sloaney last year anyway. Way to go, Batman!

WALSH: It's not Rory either.

THOMPSON: With all due respect, coach ... I'm flattered, but my best is probably behind me.

WALSH: No shit, Sherlock. It's not you.

DANGERFIELD: Wow. Good one, Tals. A bit left-field, but I like it. Next generation, and all that...

WALSH: It's not bloody Daniel Talia!

TALIA: Well, who then ... ?

They all turn and look at an empty chair opposite.

TAYLOR WALKER: *(arriving late)* YEEEEAAAAHHH BRRROOOOOOOO! Sorry I'm late, fellas. Did I miss anything? *(Looking around the room)* Geez, some good looking cats here, Philthy!

WALSH: I was just letting the boys know that I've decided to appoint you as captain. That's how we roll around here. It's all about 'Team-First'; by which I mean, it's my way or the highway.

WALKER: BANG! Get around me, BRISSSSS! I'll have to go call me 'Bundaberg Rum', she'll be over the 'David Boon'.

VAN BERLO: Um ... coach. Are you serious?

WALKER: What you talking about Willis?

DANGERFIELD: Is this a joke? I got 21 Brownlow votes last year without getting out of second gear. I'm the best player this stupid club's ever had! ME!

WALKER: Turn it up, Paddy. Apparently you're a gun at everything. Man of talent. I am this, I am that ... give me a spell.

WALSH: *(Sighs deeply)* Ok, fellas. I can see we're going to have to have a Man Conversation about this. Let's have it all out and then get on with it. That's how we do business here.

TALIA: Excuse me, coach? Isn't it a bit redundant to call it a Man Conversation, since we're all men here? It's just a regular conversation, isn't it?

WALSH: I see I've got some Mansplaining to do. A Man Conversation, or Manversation, is when we put it all on the table and then get back to work. This footy club's not about blokes feeling sorry for themselves; say what you want to say, we'll hear it, and then we'll completely ignore it. That's what men do, right boys?

ALL: Right, coach.

WALSH: Now, I'm making Tex captain because every day, coming into the club, he's all about making the team better; he thinks not what is best for himself, but what is best for the team.

WALKER: Trueaye.

WALSH: Beyond that, he actually likes and supports the Adelaide Football Club. Can anyone else here say that?

(Silence)

DANGERFIELD: Can you, coach?

WALSH: Let's move on. He also happens to be a South Australian, unlike most of us.

THOMPSON: He's from New South Wales.

WALKER: Good work, Captain Obvious!!!

WALSH: Broken Hill is practically South Australia. ABC 891 even broadcasts there and everything! Now, Tex, the club just wanted me to let you know what you'll be saying in their statement tomorrow.

(Hands him a piece of paper which reads: "I am honoured to be given this opportunity and like everyone at our Club, want to build on the hard working culture and approach. There are many

people I must thank for guiding me along the way, among them Nathan van Berlo and Simon Goodwin who are outstanding leaders."

Walker reads the piece of paper for several minutes.)

WALKER: Will I actually have to say this?

WALSH: Not from memory, mate.

WALKER: Do I need to do it all in one breath?

WALSH: Look, let's deal with all that later, shall we? We'll have a Man Conversation with Shutts in PR; he'll explain everything.

VAN BERLO: If I'm such an 'outstanding leader', why I am being shafted?

WALSH: Ah, VB, I hadn't forgotten about you. You'll be saying this...

(Hands him a piece of paper which reads: "I love the Club and in particular the playing group, and am excited about being part of this new era. Tex has always been an influential member of our playing group and I look forward to working with him and the other leaders.")

VAN BERLO: I'm not saying that!

WALSH: You are if you want to get a game this year, mate. I only pick players who are totally committed to the team. That's how Phil Walsh operates.

TALIA: Coach...?

WALSH: Yes, Tals?

TALIA: What happens if this doesn't work?

WALSH: What do you mean?

TALIA: I just mean ... what happens if after all this – Roo joining the board, signing up Fages instead of Smarty or Nobes, sacking Sando, bringing you in from Port, shafting VB, Danger and Sloaney – what happens if we still don't make the finals?

(Long, long pause.)

WALSH: Well ... We'll just have a Man Conversation and then get on with it.

WALKER: Ok, buddwas! Let's go drop some hoops and sink some Alma froffies!

(The group slowly disperses, leaving Walsh sitting alone. He decides to have a Man Soliloquy.)

WALSH: This is Phil Walsh's masterstroke. It's just crazy enough to work; when he speaks or acts, others listen and follow suit. Nothing can go wrong. Nothing. Right ... ?

Touch of the Fumbles is usually found in InDaily on Mondays during the AFL season.



Yeeaaaahhhh! Brooooooooooooo!