

THERE'S NOTHING ROUGHER THAN A TOUGH OLD BUFFER

GOOD Morning . . . (and a limping old buffers' good morning to you, too). By crikey we old fellers had good fun on Sunday!

Once every year the stars have departed from the footie fields some sadist promotes this Old Buffers game of Rules between Southport's Mouldy Moulting Maggies and Labrador's Terribly Tired Tigers.

The sides are made up mainly of old AFP players and fans from the deep South and for one exciting hour they kidded themselves that they are young again and are out here on the centre of the Melbourne Cricket Ground in front of a crowd of 90,000 kicking and marking to the applause of the multitude.

Sunday's gathering included a few Tasmanians, a sprinkling of Crow-caters, a wealth of aged Victorians and a few local ex-Rulers — a fearsome and dedicated lot they were too.

Then of course, as every circus has to have a clown or clowns there were also a couple of Scribes and the two worst referees and goal umpires ever to be sworn at by a biased barracker.

Casualties

The game started at a very fast rate with two knees, one ankle and a wrist giving out in the first quarter.

The second quarter was notable for some great



Now, see here, sport!



high marks taken by everinhellthatis took Garth Andrews (Tigers) complete control of the while standing flatfooted game for the Maggies on the ground and at and booted in goals from least 20 yards away from all directions putting the ball (at least the ref. Mouldy ones in an unbeatable position).

At this stage the Maggies were leading by 100 to the Tigers' nil — a certain goalsneak having kicked 16 goals and four behinds . . . all subsequently disallowed by the one eyed ref.

Then a ring in from the Maggies. He was ordered Latrobe Valley (where-

Then a certain Rugby League writer who works for the Bully comes from Gympie, has the initials K.K., but whose name we won't mention here because Vic Mahon will disown him if he was found playing aerial ping pong — started to run not.

He had begun the game wearing his glasses and wasn't worth a crumple all day. However, during a wild scrimmage with another old buffer who was about 92 he had his headlights knocked off his big round face and finding that he could suddenly see both the ball and the goalposts he slammed them in from all directions putting the Maggies further in front to the tune of 154 to nil.

The fight

Going into the last quarter tempers became a bit frayed and those

few who could still hobble onto the field engaged in some rough stuff.

Maggies' ruckman, Bevan Waters, copped a stiff arm which will have his pubescence feeling very tender for a few weeks to come.

During this quarter many behinds were kicked by both sides . . . in fact not a player left the field without getting his behind kicked.

Finally before any heart attacks were recorded umpire Bob Burke who seems to know very little about the game blew the final whistle.

After some hot showers the old fellers all stood around getting stuck into some cold Pilsener and telling each other how well they felt and how fit they really were, and how much better the players of their generation were than the players of today.

Recount

Then Tigers' president Jack Rehberch came in and announced that on a recount the game had been declared a draw. (Jack had enough sense not to play himself but he should sell a lot of liniment this week).

Then I went home and my dear wife said, "Did you enjoy playing the sunny Victorian football game?"

"There's nothing to rules," I said. "You just stand around and talk to the bloke next to you and after a while someone kicks the ball to you and you bang it through the goals."

As I am typing this in bed this morning, being so stiff and sore to get up, the above remark must be the understatement of the year.

Next year I am going to declare myself either too young or too old to be an old buffer.

Female furies

The preliminary to the Old Buffers game was a ladies' match.

The way these Tigeresses and Maggie Hens tore into each other it looked like sale time in the Valley.

No quarter asked or given it was tooth and nail from the first bounce. Talk about Tigeresses defending their cubs or Maggies guarding their eggs. Why this was sheer ferocity at its best!

Why you wouldn't think they were ladies at all until they kicked for goal although how they can high kick wearing party hose I will never know.

There would only be one thing tougher than playing in the Old Buffers game . . . playing in the ladies' game.

I am glad I am not a Maggie Hen or a Labrador She cat . . . wow!



Three of the stars of the Moulting Moulders, Reg Billiet, Tom Dickman and Ian Bett photographed before the game because they were unable to stand after it.

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