NewsBank
Geelong Advertiser (Australia) - October 17, 2026 - page 56
October 17, 2026 | Geelong Advertiser (Australia) | Geelong, Victoria, Australia | Page 56

Geelong Advertiser
SPORT
geelongadvertiser/sport
ISSN 1324-6216
9 771324 621066
Home delivery
1800 353 734



Pictures: Brad Fleet

CHAMP SETS SIGHTS ON US MISSION

HARD YAKKA

Geelong's Phill Hulands got the boxing bug, and it not only turned his life around but made him into a champion. Just weeks after the wheelchair boxer won the Australian Adaptive Boxing Council's first championship belt, the man known as 'The Boxing Yak' now has a bout in America in his sights next year, declaring let's 'bring back Virginia's belt'.

MEG SAULTRY REPORTS P53

BRINGING BITE

THOMSON SIGNS EX-BULLDOG AS SENIOR COACH

Dan Batten

Western Bulldogs premiership player Clay Smith has signed as senior coach of Thomson, in a bumper addition for the Tigers.

Smith (pictured) slotted 43 goals in 55 matches, including the 2016 flag, playing with the Bulldogs from 2012-2018. He retired early due to injury.

Since then the 33-year-old has held various coaching roles over the past six years in the VAFA, Western league, Central Highlands competition and in the Western Australian Goldfields.

Smith led Point Cook to a grand final appearance as senior coach from 2023-24, and took the reins at Ballan in 2025.



He will now replace renowned former Thomson coach Paul Lynch, who will lead Smith's former club Ballan in 2027.

The former Bulldog also entered the world of professional boxing in 2024, with the highlight a 30-second knockout in his third professional fight.

Thomson said it was thrilled to land a coach of Smith's standing.

"We are excited to welcome Clay to Godfrey Street and believe his experience, football knowledge and commitment to player development will be invaluable as we look to build a strong and successful future for the Thomson Tigers," the club wrote on social media.

"We would also like to extend a warm welcome to Clay's partner, Jade, and their children, Charlotte and Zac, as they become part of the Thomson Tigers family. We look forward to welcoming the whole family to the club and making them feel at home at Godfrey St.

"We look forward to working with Clay as we embark on this exciting new chapter for our club, our players and our wider football community."



BASKETBALL

RED-HOT VENOM ACE STAYS COOL

Geelong Venom star Maddy Rocci has credited coach Cheryl Chambers for helping keep her emotions in check during Thursday night's 103-90 loss to the Tasmania Jewels.

In her debut for her new WNBL club, Rocci finished with a game-high 33 points as the competition's new outfit marked its arrival with a bang.

REPORTS PAGE 55



Maddy Rocci

GREEN EYES CAPE TOWN RETURN P52 PLUS RACING FIELDS, NEWS P47-51

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Geelong Advertiser (online), 17 Oct 2026 56 ‹https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AUNB&docref=image/v2%3A17ED03527356E220%40AUNB-1AB31B9C649CC44B%402461331-1AB473D0FAA239A4%4055-1AB473D0FAA239A4%40›
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