

WILL HAMILL & DARREN MINCHINGTON

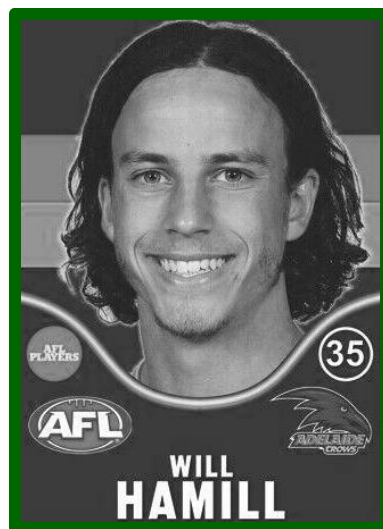
(Ref: 2020/16)

INTRODUCTION

The articles posted below are in regard to two former Dromana players. The first story is about Will Hamill, who is now listed with the Adelaide Crows; and the other tells about Darren Minchington's recent debut for the Hawthorn FC.

WILL HAMILL who played with Dromana in 2017 was drafted to the Crows and made his Senior AFL debut against the Gold Coast Suns in Round: 3 this season. Some younger readers may not be aware that Will's Father, Steve, coached DFNC in 2006-07-08 and was influential in strengthening the club in that era.

The following story about Will appeared on the Crows' AFL website on 20th July 2020. The article was written by Marc McGowan, a reporter for AFL Media.



THE STORY AS POSTED ON THE CROWS' WEBSITE –

20th JULY 2020

**A WILL TO SUCCEED
YOUNG DEFENDER OFFERS GLIMPSE INTO CROWS'
FUTURE**

Will Hamill is impressing as one of five Adelaide debutants this year

By Marc McGowan.

WE DIDN'T know much about Will Hamill only a mere month ago. At that stage, the dashing defender from Dromana was just one of the many untried kids on Adelaide's regenerating list but since then he's become a beacon of hope.

Hamill's played four straight senior games for Matthew Nicks' Crows – one ruined early by a concussion – and he looks increasingly comfortable at AFL level in his second season.



**New Adelaide defender Will Hamill.
Picture: Kelly Barnes/AFL Photo.**

Adelaide was largely in premiership-chasing mode over the past four years under ex-coach Don Pyke and had the equal-fewest debutants in that time with West Coast. This season, with the Crows' new, longer-term intentions clear, their five debutants (Hamill, Ned McHenry, Fischer McAsey, Shane McAdam and Andrew McPherson) are more than any other team.

"I'm really enjoying it – it's a lot of fun playing at the top level," Hamill told *AFL.com.au* ahead of Monday night's clash with St Kilda.

"It'd be nice to have a few wins but I'm just trying to take the positives from it."

Hamill, who's already re-signed until 2022, spent most of last year in the SANFL focused on locking down on his opponents but his coach Brent Reilly encouraged his offensive weapons to blossom as the season progressed. That education went into warp speed this past summer. The 19-year-old is already displaying an excellent blend of the two in his brief AFL career to date.



He's using his pace to take the game on – he was a national-level long jumper and triple jumper as a junior – but is also performing admirably in one-on-one warfare, even with his light frame.

Luke Brown and Daniel Talia are among those offering Hamill advice on the defensive side, while Brodie Smith and Rory Laird are teaching him the offensive tricks of the trade.

"You look at Brodie, Lairdy and Dave Mackay and their running patterns and how they get the handball receives – it's unbelievable," Hamill said.

"You kind of look at them in awe, thinking, 'How can I get to that level?' but they've all been really helpful trying to get me to use my legs a bit more and run off." Hamill was somewhat late in contemplating an AFL career, after focusing mostly on athletics until he returned from a year-long family exchange trip in Canada when he was 14.

He still raves about that experience, where he enjoyed being "just a normal kid", given ice hockey was the sport obsession and he was "absolutely no good at that".

In fact, Hamill didn't make an interleague football squad until the under-16s, after which he earned a tryout with NAB League club Dandenong Stingrays, where he was drafted from. However, football was always a big part of his life, given his dad, Steve, is a former Frankston captain in the old VFA, playing alongside three of Hamill's uncles.

"He was a good local footballer but he doesn't let me hear the end of it," Hamill said with a laugh.



Hamill has the bragging rights now as an AFL footballer, a lifestyle he sometimes escapes from through one of his first loves, piano, and another passion he adopted from his father. But he's firmly focused for now on the Saints.

"They're a very good side," Hamill said.

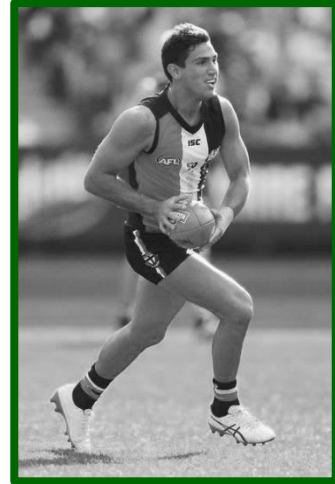
"I'm really looking forward to the game, because Hunter Clark plays for them and I'm mates with him.

"He's a star, so it'll be good fun to play against him and also to play in front of a home crowd at Adelaide Oval."

A SUCCESSFUL RETURN TO AFL RANKS

Former Dromana footballer, Darren Minchington, made a successful return to AFL ranks on July 19th after a long battle to overcome persistent injury. Darren, who made his debut with St Kilda against Hawthorn in Round: 20 against at Docklands in 2013 , went on to play 28 games and kick 22 goals Darren's last game for the Saints was against the Western Bulldogs on May 27th 2017.

Since then, Darren has been in 'football limbo' coping with a series of frustrating and debilitating injuries which saw him delisted, by St Kilda, at the end of 2018. However, in an astute and insightful recruiting initiative, Hawthorn threw Darren a 'lifeline' and he signed on with the Hawks.



Just as Darren was hitting his straps, bad luck struck again, and, in another serious set back, Darren did not play a senior AFL game in 2018. However, he has persevered and, in an admirable show of resilience, forced his way back into the Hawthorn team for the Round: 7 clash against Melbourne, in West Sydney, last Sunday (July 19th).

Darren's comeback can only be admired because, as in such a tough-minded, competitive and highly scrutinized sport as AFL football, persistent injuries can create perplexing obstacles for footballers. At 26 years of age, Darren's selection, for the Hawks against Melbourne. was richly deserved; and he repaid the Hawks' faith with a most serviceable performance (13 disposals including several very 'classy' acts to set-up forward opportunities for his teammates).

'Fingers are crossed' for Darren Minchington in the months ahead. 2020 will be a season that supporters will never forget; but it is hoped, that Darren will make his 'new start' in AFL something to remember.

Everyone at DFNC wishes Darren well at Hawthorn; and congratulates him on his dogged persistence and never-say-die spirit to return to senior football. Well done Darren!

THANK YOU

DFNC wishes to thank Marc McGowan and the Crows FC for permission to publish the above article regarding Will Hamill. Some parts, of the original extract, were omitted as they pertained to other matters regarding the Crows. Marc McGowan's original article can be found at:

<https://www.afl.com.au/news/465973/a-will-to-succeed-young-defender-offers-glimpse-into-crows-future>

REFERENCE & RESEARCH INFORMATION

Sources: AFL statistical files - Crows FC website-DFNC publications.

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