

Football stories don't get better

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TYSON Edwards adds his name to the Crows' record books for all time today when he walks on to Docklands Stadium and makes his rightful place among the greatest players to have donned the tri-colours of the Adelaide Football Club.

He joins his long-time teammates Mark Ricciuto, Ben Hart and Andrew McLeod in the 300 club at West Lakes it unlike the other three, Tyson was an overnight success.

His debut year in 1995 was impressive, finishing a very credible 10th in the club's best and fairest, but his next few years – despite the premierships successes – were a personal struggle to find his niche at the club.

His breakout game didn't come until Round 17 in 1999 when he kicked four goals against the Hawks. With the demise of Malcolm Blight and the arrival of Gary Ayres a new Tyson Edwards was born, and he has never looked back. With Andrew McLeod he remains the final link to the early days of the Crows.

Most of the old boys departed the scene by 1997 and the fondest memories for many of them in their last year was the arrival of fresh-faced Edwards and McLeod, both full of cheek in the darkest era the club had ever experienced.

The teenagers were almost oblivious to the chaos they had walked into, but they kept morale high when the club was on the brink of disaster in

ent but, more importantly, of great character that would see them make an enormous impact on their club. The duo was inseparable in the early days and while that is no longer the case, you sense they are too good to allow this grudge to burden them for much longer.

While McLeod has carried the superstar tag with him for most of his career, Edwards has carried a similar long-term label of the most underrated player the club has ever produced. No more incorrect statement has ever been made.

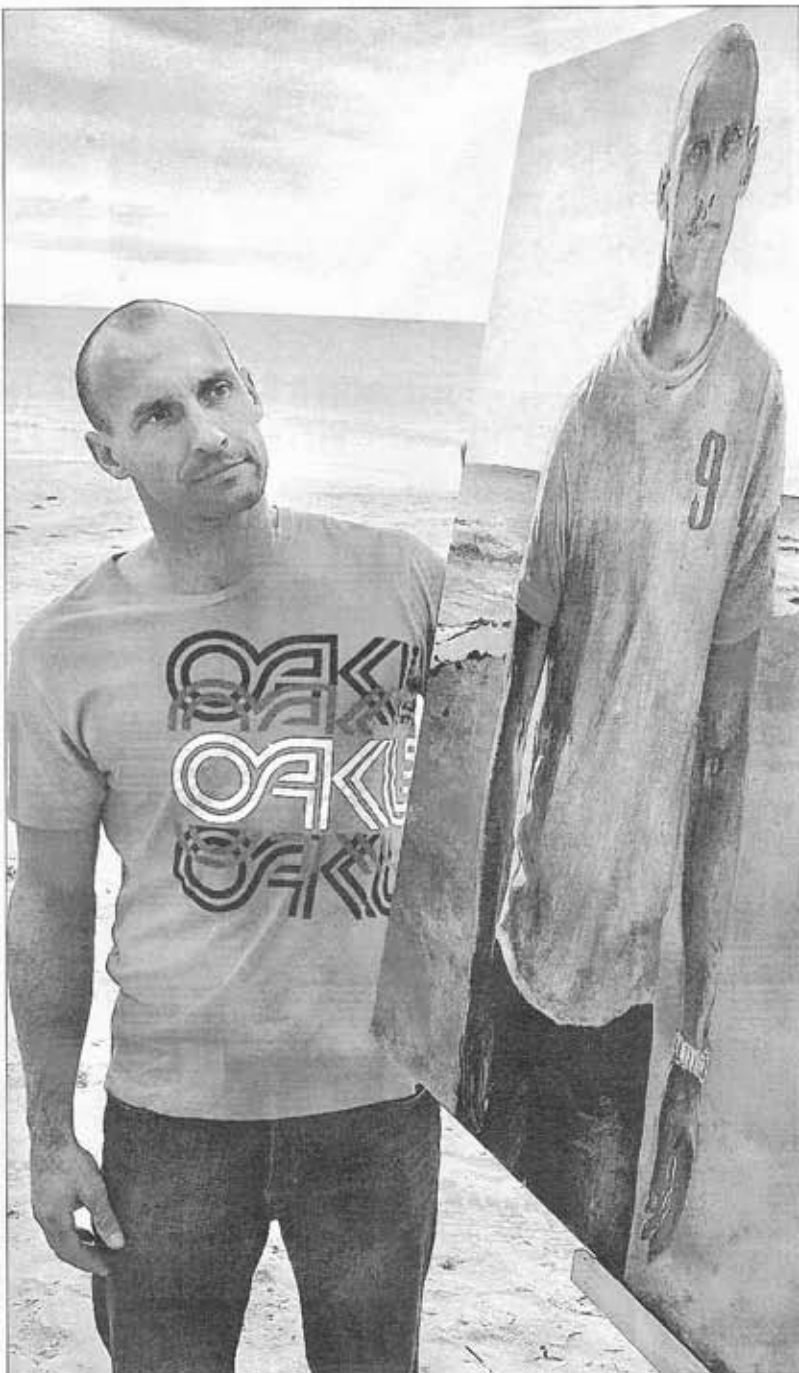
No one with any football intelligence has ever under-rated Tyson and while his football resume on first glimpse doesn't appear to compare to the Crows' other 300-club members, it is not yet complete and you get the feeling a long deserved yellow jacket will sit comfortably on his shoulders at the end of the season.

Over the journey of Tyson's 15 years at West Lakes, he has produced an amazingly consistent high level of performance.

At season's end he will have finished in the top 10 on Best and Fairest night an amazing 11 times. If all continues to go well, nine of those will have been inside the top five.

All-Australian selection is a noticeable omission from Tyson's resume. Of the quartet, Roo leads the way with a staggering eight jumpers, McLeod has five and Hart four.

Who knows, maybe the selectors will take notice in his twilight years and give him the nod just one time but the competition he faces is at an



MAN IN THE MIRROR: Tyson Edwards with his portrait

While many of his teammates have struggled with form in the first half of this season, Edwards has produced some of the best minutes of his career.

His body appears in great nick, benefiting from an organic lifestyle designed to prolong his last few years in the game. As a result possessions have come in big numbers and he has flown the flag many times this year with little support.

His football beauty has always been his use of the ball, set up by a pair of hands that just do not fumble.

In terms of a two-sided player he is streets ahead of any other to have worn the tricolours, save the Jarman brothers.

His football smarts and ability to get out of jail are also second to just a chosen few. More importantly, he is a good human.

Modest and respectful to the very end, but his football experience has certainly toughened him up.

Gone is the happy-go-lucky, carefree country boy replaced by a loyal family

stories in the Crows' 19-year history.

Tyson was never heralded as the next big thing like the arrival of Mark Ricciuto.

His wasn't a fairytale like the Ben Hart story. Straight out of college and short pants and into the brutal world of the AFL.

He didn't burst onto the scene like McLeod with pace and sheer brilliance and have two Norm Smith Medals, two premierships and a best and fairest, and an All-Australian jumper to his name after just four years in the game.

Tyson was the quite achiever slowly building a game that would hold up against the competition's very best.

His small frame needed much work and, at his size, competing at the highest level against the game's best midfielders would continually throw up challenge after challenge.

Five years and three coaches later Gary Ayres released the star inside the man and from Round 1 in 2000