



MCC LIBRARY FACT SHEET MAY 9, 2026

AFL 2026 ROUND 9 GEELONG V COLLINGWOOD

BARWON – GEELONG’S FORGOTTEN RIVAL

Geelong’s jerseys with navy and white hoops are a distinctive part of the club’s identity. However, they were not the first football club to adopt the uniform in sleepy hollow. In fact, it was first adopted by its bitterest rivals, a club named Barwon.

Geelong is the second oldest football club in Australia having been founded at a meeting at the Victoria Hotel on July 18, 1859. In the 1860s and 1870s it drew players largely from the local private schools, professionals, and landowners. With the advent of a Saturday half-day holiday in the latter half of the 1860s the working man demographic was allowed more leisure time. Therefore, the late 1860s and early 1870s saw a flurry of football club formation. The Barwon Football Club was founded in 1874. It drew its players from the burgeoning working class area along the Barwon River and was backed by the “nouveau riche” factory owners in that district.

Geelong and Barwon first met in July 1875. It was for the Geelong, Ballarat and Western District Challenge Cup. The match unpleasantly surprised the older club when it ended in a draw. Barwon and Geelong played again in August, and it also resulted in a draw, one goal apiece. The third game in September was scoreless and ended in controversy after Barwon supporters invaded the ground. They were incensed by decisions by the umpire, Tom Wills, who had previously captained Geelong. Geelong’s current captain, George Day, called the game off. Although they had not defeated Barwon, Geelong claimed permanent possession of the cup. Day even taunted angry Barwon supporters with it.

In 1876 Wills offered a new challenge cup for the Western District. This year Barwon adopted a blue and white hooped jumper. One month later Geelong made an identical uniform change. To facilitate a match between the local rivals in July, Geelong, as holders of the Challenge Cup, had directed Barwon players to add a pink sash over their hoops. In this match Barwon defended a one-goal lead by continually forcing the ball out of bounds. This was within the rules, but Geelong considered the tactic not in, “the spirit of the game”. Geelong members met hours later and passed a resolution never to play Barwon “owing to their cowardly conduct today”. However, in 1877, Barwon successfully played against top teams from Melbourne and claimed ownership of the Western District Challenge Cup too.

In response to Barwon’s rise, Geelong adopted more professional training, recruiting and playing regimes. In May 1878 Geelong agreed to play Barwon, and such was the local interest, the match drew a crowd of 3000. The much-improved older club won by two goals to one. However, the bitterness persisted. In September 1878, Barwon hosted Geelong for what would be the last game between the sides. Geelong completely outclassed Barwon, prompting a series of brawls on the ground. Eventually members of the crowd joined in and the match ended in a riot. The fighting even continued that evening in the town centre.

Public opinion, led by the *Geelong Advertiser*, blamed the incidents squarely on the Barwon team and its supporters. Barwon was also struggling financially. It was unable to secure an enclosed ground, like those of Geelong (Corio Oval) and the Melbourne teams, which charged admission. In 1879 it was absorbed by Chilwell, now Newtown & Chilwell playing in the Geelong Football Netball League. In contrast Geelong won the 1878 VFA premiership. This was the club’s first of seven in nine years. Never again would Geelong face such a strong local rival. It seems Barwon’s tenacious rivalry stung Geelong into action and forced it to move towards a more professional approach to team management that delivered unprecedented success in the 1880s.

BRITANNIA THEN COLLINGWOOD

The strongest of the local teams in the Collingwood area during the 1880s, Britannia Football Club was founded in 1877. It also had links to the adjoining suburb of Fitzroy. Britannia sought admission to the VFA on several occasions but was not considered to be strong enough to compete successfully in the senior competition. However, a strong push had developed to have a club in the VFA which represented the area, and during 1891 a new entity called Collingwood, at that time without a team, was given an assurance that it would be admitted to the VFA in 1892. In early 1892, the Britannia club decided to disband, its members reaching the conclusion that it would not be able to compete with the new club. Bitter about this turn of events, the majority of Britannia’s players and officials threw in their lot with the neighbouring Fitzroy Football Club.

THIS ROUND IN HISTORY – ROUND 9 AT THE MCG

The highest Round 9 score on the MCG is 32.19 (211) by Geelong against Richmond 10.17 (77) in 1989. This is also the highest score for this Round on all grounds. The most goals kicked in this round is 14 kicked by Gary Ablett Snr. in the same game. The greatest winning margin here in Round 9 is 141 points by Melbourne over Hawthorn in 1926 – 21.28 (154) to 1.7 (13). There has been one drawn game in Round 9 on the MCG. Melbourne and Collingwood each scored 10.5 (65) in 1909. Four drawn games have occurred on other grounds in Round 9. The highest Round 9 attendance was at the MCG in 1964 when 86,664 saw Melbourne 10.13 (73) defeat Collingwood 8.15 (63).

STATISTICS FOR GEELONG V COLLINGWOOD

Geelong v Collingwood by Venue

	Won by Geelong	Won by Collingwood	Drawn
Corio Oval	21	22	1
Docklands Stad.	2	2	0
East Melb. CG	1	1	0
Gabba	1	0	0
Kardinia Park	19	22	0
MCG	32	25	0
Perth Stadium	0	1	0
Victoria Park	25	57	0
Waverley Park	5	6	0
	106	136	1

Highest Score

Geelong	23.18 (156)	Rd 13	1940	Corio
Collingwood	28.16 (184)	Rd 9	1972	VP

Lowest Score

Geelong	3.2 (20)	Rd 13	1902	VP
Collingwood	1.4 (10)	Rd 10	1897	Corio

Greatest Winning Margin

Geelong	96 points	Rd 24	2011	MCG
Collingwood	102 points	Rd 8	2006	MCG

Last Time They Met – Round 8, 2025, MCG

	Collingwood	Geelong
Quarter time	4.5	4.2
Half time	7.7	6.6
Three-quarter time	10.10	9.9
Full time	12.15 (87)	13.12 (90)

Most Goals in a Match (10 goals or more)

12	P. McKenna	Coll	Rd 9	1972	VP
11	G. Goninon	Geel	SF2	1951	MCG
11	R. Todd	Coll	PF	1938	MCG

GRAND FINALS BETWEEN THE TEAMS

Geelong and Collingwood have met in six Grand Finals, Geelong winning four (1925, 1937, 1952 and 2011) and Collingwood two (1930 and 1953).

Geelong won its first VFL premiership in 1925, the year the competition was expanded to twelve teams with the admission of Footscray, North Melbourne and Hawthorn. Geelong finished on top, followed by Essendon, Melbourne and Collingwood. Despite losing only two games during the season, Geelong lost to Collingwood in a semi final, but then, under the Argus system in place at the time, challenged for the premiership after the Magpies beat Melbourne in what was known as the final. A then record crowd of 64,288 saw Geelong take the flag by 10 points. The Cats' captain-coach Cliff Rankin kicked five of Geelong's ten goals.

Collingwood's 1953 victory put paid to Geelong's hopes of winning three premierships on end. Although they finished the home and away games on top, the Cats had lost form late in the season and were easily beaten by Collingwood in the second semi final. They recovered to beat Footscray and qualify for a rematch, but Collingwood took the flag by 12 points after Geelong had staged a comeback in the final quarter. Bill, Mick and Pat Twomey became the only set of three brothers ever to play together in a premiership team.

RAINED OUT

A freak storm hit Melbourne in the late afternoon of Friday July 12, 1963, with 25 points (6.35mm) of rain falling in 15 minutes. This was followed by further heavy falls overnight. Round 11 games were to be played on Saturday the 13th at Glenferrie Oval (Hawthorn), Arden Street (North Melbourne), the Western Oval (Footscray), Punt Road (Richmond) and the Lake Oval (South Melbourne). The sixth game of the round was to be between Geelong and Collingwood at Kardinia Park. On Saturday morning the VFL announced that although the Lake Oval and Kardinia Park could have hosted matches, the other four grounds were in such poor condition that all games would be postponed for a week. This meant that the remaining seven rounds were also pushed back by a week, the grand final being played on October 5. In what would be a premiership year for the club, Geelong won the postponed match against Collingwood by 12 points.

Fact sheets are prepared by MCC Library Volunteers David Allen, Eric Panther, Quentin Miller, Dennis Carroll, Ian Wilkinson, Gerry Verstoep, Gaye Fitzpatrick, and Edward Cohen, with MCC Deputy Librarian Trevor Ruddell and the assistance of Col Hutchinson of the AFL