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Young Man in a Hurry

Matthew Lloyd is a very young man with a very big future... and he knows where he is going. Interviewed by Gary Walsh.

ne of the highlights of Essendon's pre-season has been the form of 16-year old Matthew Lloyd, a priority selection in the February draft after a deal with Fremantle. In his first outing, ironically against Fremantle, Matthew caught the eye of a few astute judges with his play. But that was nothing compared to the attention he created a week later, when he starred in the triangular round-robin challenge with Carlton and Collingwood. He took big marks, kicked impressive goals and stamped himself as one of the hottest prospects in football. This kid has a very bright future, so we thought it was a good time to introduce him to you.

You came from Western Jets in the under-18 competition. Tell us about last season.

I just spent one year in that comp. I kicked 50 goals playing at centre half forward and full forward.

How did it feel when you learned you had been drafted by Essendon?

I couldn't be happier. I'm learning so much from Kevin Sheedy and all the blokes.

Have you been happy with the way you've been going?

I'm pretty hard on myself. The club was pretty happy with my practice game (against Collingwood reserves), but I know I can do a lot better. It's just a matter of getting used to playing at a higher level of football. I should be right.

What has been the biggest challenge for you?

I'm used to being able to take a mark whenever I want to, whereas here everyone's equal in ability. That is probably the hardest thing I've had to cope with.

So in a sense it's been easy for you until now?

At a junior level I've always been better than

competition I did pretty well, so I have probably done it pretty easy. Now playing for Essendon is a dream come true – I've wanted it for so long.

What are your hopes for this season?

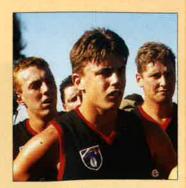
Short-term, even though I'm only 16 I really want to play senior footy this year. I'm in there now (for the Dockers game). Hopefully I can just stay in now and take the opportunity and have a go at it. I'd like to start off this year on a flank and hopefully end up at centre half-forward.

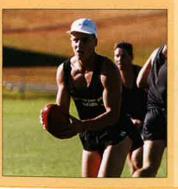
Are there any parts of your game you have to work on?

I've been in the gym a lot lately, but I suppose I have to get a bit stronger, and work on my opposite side. I'm a left-footer, but my right side has improved a lot since I've been working on it. **B**

"I've grown up with it. As soon as I was born I had a footy. I love the high marking, which is something the other sports haven't got."

everyone else. As a 16 year old in the under-18









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