

## **Tom “Snr” O’Rourke**

### **CONGRATULATIONS ON 100 GAMES**

Subject to the volcanic ash cloud and flight delays, Tom O’Rourke will play his 100<sup>th</sup> game for the club this weekend against North Fremantle at Gil Fraser Reserve, in what is a massive game as the A grade side looks to continue its undefeated in 2011. A great servant of the club, current committee and all round great weirdo, “Snr” has spent many seasons holding down the key backline position of full back on the hallowed McGillivray turf, rarely losing a one on one battle. Fellow teammate and Brother Peter O’Rourke caught up with Snr this week to find out about his stint at the club.....

- **Snr, great to catch up with you prior to this weekend’s blockbuster with yourself hopefully returning in time from a shopping extravaganza in Melbourne. It is an important and celebrated milestone 100 games at the club, but what does playing 100 games for the UFC mean to you?**

It certainly means a lot. With Uni being such a transient club not many players actually make it to 100 games. So to get my name up on the board is a real accomplishment.

- **Why did you come to the Great UFC?**

Totally by accident actually. A couple of guys I played footy with at school said they were going to have a run down at Uni after visiting the UFC tent at O-Day. I think they made it down to 1 session and went to Collegians instead. A couple of the older guys at college were already at the UFC and they convinced me to stick around.

- **Tell me who are the coaches you have had in your time at the club and can you tell us a bit about each of them?**

Gavin Harrigan & Chopper (Colts ’05) – Straight out of school these guys taught us colts a thing or two. Although we didn’t have much success on the field (we didn’t even manage to win a game) we had a hell of a time of it. In fact I think Hag was more interested in his own performance on a Friday night than his team’s performance on a Saturday morning. We had some absolute belter games of bottles during post match festivities.

Greg Shine (Colts ’06) – Shiny had a very different approach to coaching then Hags and Chopper. Managed to get the most from the players he had at his disposal and took us to a premiership. He also made the coaching masterstroke of taking me out of the backline and putting me at centre half forward. We won a premiership because of that.

Kane Loxley (A-Res ’07) – A very good player who I was lucky enough to be coached by. Loxo gave me the opportunity to play in pretty much every position on the field that year, including midfield and ruck.

Howard Styles (A Grade ’07) – I managed to sneak a couple of Grade games under Howdy, including a less than impressive debut where I managed to kick the ball out of bounds on the full about 6 times.

Ian Rakich (A Grade ’08 & ’09) – Rako laid the foundations of the success we have enjoyed in the last couple of years. Put a lot of time and energy into the club and the results are showing. I have Rako to thank for a lot as he gave me a full season in A Grade

and I haven't looked back. Was the first coach to put my name in at full back with permanent marker.

Tom Matson & Damian Crimmins (A Grade '10) – These two managed to take the A Grade side into the finals for the first time in a decade. Losing Tommy during the week due to work commitments was a real blow, but Crimmo really stepped up and got us to the finals. They must have been using an old coaching board of Rako's because my name was still permanently at full back.

Luke Dwyer (A Grade '11) – Freaky has made a real impact since coming down. Very professional about the way he coaches, we have managed to have us in a pretty good position at the halfway mark of the year. Again he must be using the same coaching board as previous coaches, as my name still seems to be in permanent marker at full back.

- **Can you give us a few of your highlights both on and off the field since being at the club?**

On Field - Beating North Beach on their home deck has been a massive highlight, as well as our colts premiership in 2006. Uni games has also been a great highlight, with the Crocs claiming a gold medal just before I graduated.

Off Field – Any of the great shows/bus trips/keg-offs I have been to over the years all rate highly.

- **Speaking of off-field highlights, you have a reputation for putting in some worst on ground performances at almost every social occasions. Walk us through a couple of them.**

The worst would have to have been International Day a few years back. My country was America, so I went down to the op shop and bought the largest basketball shoes I could find. Unfortunately they acted more like skis than shoes and as I was running to a table to get a drink during a challenge. Instead of stopping I when skiing straight into and over the table knocking it, and all the drinks on it over, thus ruining the game for everyone. Fair to say I copped a lot of abuse for that and was sin binned for a long time.

- **Given your eagerness to dress up like a woman for most events how has this impacted on your success rate at the AJ?**

Very poorly. I don't think I have ever spoken to a girl at the AJ unless to was to ask for a beer from one of the bar girls. Even then I struggle.

- **Tom, I have observed you have buy numerous items shopping online, test wine whilst out at a restaurant, and check yourself in the mirror every 2 minutes. Is this to assist in your preparation for football or in chasing the finer sex?**

With football and women it's all about perception. If I seem like I know what I'm doing, then the rest looks after itself. Even though a lot of the time I have no idea what I'm doing.

- **There have been some very handy players rocking around in the UFC jumper over the years, but who are the greatest players you have seen to pull on the UFC Jumper?**

David Crudeli – An absolute magician. The Krud-man has been a favourite of mine to watch since colts days.

Simon Jones – Such a hard worker on the field and has very sticky fingers. A real asset to have holding down CHF.

Brad Mumford – Before his knee injury he was my partner in crime down back. Nothing ever got past him. Together we would have formed the skinniest key position backmen in the comp.

I could throw in a host of other names likes Kane Loxley, Mat O’Hara, Matt Breen, Steven Wood, Nathan Hogg, James Grabski, but you are only scratching the surface.

- **What was the Greatest Victory you have been involved in?**

It is hard to go past any Grand Final win, so our 2006 colts premiership would have to be my greatest victory. After not winning a game in ’05 I didn’t have high hopes for following year. However with a new coach to replace The Hag and the usual turnover of players we managed to scrape into the finals in 5<sup>th</sup> position. We made the grand final and managed to win over fierce rivals Collegians. What made it extra sweet was a couple of the guys who bailed on Uni when I first came down were on the losing team. Suckers.

- **Over the distance there have been some successful teams you have been involved in across various grades at the UFC. What do you believe was the greatest UFC team you have been involved with?**

In terms of success the colts team of 2006 would have to be the right up there. Making the finals last year in A Grade was also a real highlight. Let’s hope we can build on that again this year.

- **Apart from me, who is the Most Memorable Player you have played with?**

Probably Jarryd Little. An absolute legend. One of the 3 colts from the winless ’05 season who went on to a premiership in ’06. Not exactly our best player but he was everything you could ever want from a captain.

- **Bus trips are a massive part of UFC culture, and you have definitely contributed to this with personal attacks on Jack Lucas, who do you sit next to on the bus trip, both there and back?**

On the way there I generally take up a whole seat to stretch out.

On the way back I sit next to my adopted colt.

- **Who do you sit next to in the change rooms?**

Since Mumfy’s injury I don’t sit next to anyone in particular, although I try to avoid the door next to the toilet once Hoggy arrives.

- **What is your favourite position both on and off the field?**

On field – I don’t really get much of a choice these days, its either full back or bench.

Off field – On the couch on a Sunday afternoon.

▪ **Favourite Movie, Food, Beverage?**

Movie – Apocalypse Now

Food – Chili mussels

Beverage - Cola

▪ **Funniest situation on the field?**

Towards to the end of the 2005 season Chopper bought his girlfriend down to watch his coaching skills in action. It was a fairly nice day so she was sitting right on the boundary line, which probably wasn't the best idea. Sometime during the game an opposition player was tackled across the boundary, but not before trying to kick the leather off the footy as he was slung to the ground, hitting the poor girl in the face leaving her with stitch marks on her face from the footy. I think Chopper copped a fair bit of abuse for that.

I also remember kneeing you in the tight, Peter, for telling me to man up on someone in primary school footy. I got dragged for that for some reason.

▪ **What would you say are the strengths of your game? (Your claims as the best forward at the club seem to have subsided in recent times)**

I have put my dreams of being a forward on hold for the moment, for the greater good of the team.

I would say my closing speed and spoiling (hence the nickname 'The Flying Fist') would definitely be my greatest attributes. I also like to think I can read the play like a book.

▪ **And the weaknesses? (apart from the obvious)**

You used to direct a lot of criticism my way in regards to my kicking, in particular not kicking the ball to you. You also singled out my decision making when I decided not to kick it to you. However that seems to have quieted down since your move down back has made it easier for me to feed you the ball.

My frame probably isn't as big as yours so I get a fair bit of stick for that, including you giving me the nickname 'P.O.W', as in Prisoner of War for my skeletal figure. My fitness definitely leaves something to be desired.

▪ **So Tom, where do you see yourself in 5, 10 and 20 years?**

5 years – Hopefully being a bit more worldly after some time spend travelling.

10 years – Cheering on the UFC from the new stand that's in the pipeline.

20 years – Who knows? Probably bragging to my nephews how much better I was than their Dad.

▪ **Word Association. What do you think of when I say the following?**

**Triple P** – The UFC's version of the Make a Wish Foundation for underprivileged colts.

**AJ** – Place of much mischief.

**Medal Count** - The winner of the O'Rourke head to head is more important than the actual winner.

**Greg Shine** – Coach Bombay

**Broken Bones** – Seem to happen far too often.

**Bus Trips** – Winning big on the dogs. Usually ends in wrestling.

**Keg Off** – The older I get the more I realize how much technique is involved. Usually ends in wrestling.

**\$1000 Draw** – Pay day 2010. Same Alexeeff banging on about it being 'the best day of the year'.

**Full Back** – The position where all attacks start from.

**Full Forwards** - Lazy. My arch-nemesis'

**Brad Mumford** – Partner in crime down back. More reliable than Erk-Dog using his jacket potato ra-ta-ta on a bus trip.

**Sam Wallace** – Probably a harsher critic of my goal kicking than you Junior.

**Matt Breen** – Known as the Big Horse on the field, morphs effortlessly into the Sea Horse on his surf board.

**Peter O'Rourke** – Definitely my harshest critic

**Matt Judd** – Loves to rack up the junk time stats. Has been on the receiving end of some perfect forward fifty entries from yours truly.

**Amelia Broun**– My number 1 fan.

**Daniel Wheeler** – Looked 25 years old when he was 20. Now that he has had a few thousand beers and stopped playing footy he looks like he is 50.

**The Scratch Dance** – Tried and tested technique of attracting the ladies on the dance floor.

**Tom 'chal' Chaloner** – Housemate and life coach. Very soft footballer. Given rise to a whole new vocabulary.

Thanks Tom, as always a delight to catch up with you. You've been a good sport and provided plenty of humour again. I have been lucky enough to play a fair amount of footy with you, and let me say I consider it a real honour! You are a 'legend' of the club, and thoroughly deserve your name on the 100 game board. Congratulations mate and look forward to seeing you get amongst the action this weekend. Best of luck and go Uni!!