

ABLETT JR. WINS MADDEN MEDAL

Thursday 11th March

Geelong and Gold Coast champion Gary Ablett Jr. is still winning awards, even in retirement, with the 2020 Madden Medal the latest celebration of his extraordinary football journey.

The Madden Medal is awarded to the retiring player who has best demonstrated on-field excellence, personal development and growth, as well as community spirit over the course of his playing career, and is named after former AFLPA Presidents Simon and Justin Madden.

Ablett, who played 357 AFL games after being taken in the 2001 National Draft, received the award ahead of a strong field of nominees, including Justin Westhoff, Kade Simpson, Harry Taylor, Travis Varcoe and Brad Ebert.

Ablett boasts one of the most extensive list of accolades the game has seen, including two Brownlow Medals, five Leigh Matthews Trophies, six club best and fairest awards, eight All-Australian selections and two premiership medallions. He also dedicated time to Compassion Australia, to assist children in poverty, and business ventures Exclusive Insight, Post High and ActiveVacay.

“As footballers, we contribute a lot to our on-field careers but there’s also significant effort away from the field as well, so to be recognised for that is an honour,” Ablett said.

“To be alongside names such as Hodge, Riewoldt and Judd, guys I rubbed shoulders with throughout my career, and receive an award named after the Maddens, who contributed so much to the game, is humbling.”

Simon Madden, who played against Ablett’s father, Gary Sr., paid tribute to the little master’s career on and off the field.

“I always thought his father was the best footballer I’ve seen and, while I always said I’d never compare them while one’s still playing, I might have to reconsider my viewpoint and I know he’s very keen on looking after people off the ground as well,” Madden said.

The Madden Medal is decided by a vote from the AFL Players’ Association Board, as well as past winners of the award, and was first presented in 2007.

Past winners of the award include Luke Hodge, Brendon Goddard, Nick Riewoldt, Matthew Pavlich, Chris Judd, Lenny Hayes, Jude Bolton, Luke Power, Cameron Ling, Brett Kirk, Michael O’Loughlin, Robert Harvey and Glenn Archer.

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