

VLASTUIN, ELLIS SECURED

RICHMOND has re-signed first-round draft picks Nick Vlastuin and Corey Ellis.

Vlastuin, 22, and Ellis, 19, who were to have come out of contract at the end of this season, have re-signed for three and two seasons respectively.

"We're really pleased with the ongoing development of both Nick and Corey," Tigers football manager Dan

Richardson said yesterday.

"It's been great to see Nick spend some time in the midfield recently and, for a second-year player, Corey has been very composed and consistent in the backline this season."

Richmond recruited Vlastuin with pick No.9 in the 2012 national draft and Ellis came to Punt Rd two years later with pick No.12.

Vlastuin has played 69 games since his 2013 debut. Ellis, who made his debut last season, has played 15.

Meanwhile, Richmond forward Ben Lennon had surgery this week on the AC joint in his right shoulder.

Lennon suffered the injury at training last week and missed the Tigers' VFL clash against Essendon. He is expected to miss up to six weeks.



Daw to cover if Goldy misses

MAJAK Daw is a ready-made replacement for North Melbourne ruckman Todd Goldstein, says Kangaroos defender Michael Firrito.

But Firrito would not put money on Goldstein missing North's blockbuster against Richmond at Hobart's Blundstone Arena tomorrow night — the first AFL night game to be held in Tasmania.

Goldstein is racing the clock to be ready, after straining his right knee in North's 26-point loss to Sydney at the SCG last Friday.

Firrito said the All-Australian ruckman was still a chance to play, and he could prove it at training at Arden St this morning before the Kangaroos head to Hobart.

"We'll give 'Goldy' every chance — he's a fierce competitor so I wouldn't bet against him playing," Firrito said yesterday.

"But if he doesn't come up, Majak will be more than capable of filling that role.

"He's been knocking the door down at VFL level and when he played a couple of weeks ago he played his role really well."

Firrito, the commander of North's back six, warned that the Tigers were no one-man band up forward.

"The thing Richmond have improved on is they are not just (Jack) Riewoldt conscious — they don't go to him every

JAMES BRESNEHAN

time," Firrito said. "He's the beacon down there and a lot of ball does go to him, but they've got other avenues to goal too now that makes them really dangerous.

"(Brett) Deledio has been down there a bit and we know what sort of player he is.

"(Ben) Griffiths is having his breakout season, Ty Vickery bobs up and kicks a few goals and (Sam) Lloyd as well. He has kicked some crucial goals for them.

"There's a lot of avenues to goal these days and that's a big improvement in their game and one we will have to look closely at."

North Melbourne is expected to announce a five-year, three-games-a-season deal with the Tasmanian Government before the game.

"It's a big occasion. Friday night footy is the standout timeslot and the spotlight turns on you," Firrito said.

"It will be very special to play Tasmania's first night game in Hobart. It's a great place, Blundstone has an unbelievable atmosphere and it's a state-of-the-art stadium with great facilities for the players and a great deck as well.

"We love coming down there and we are very excited about it."

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Defender Nick Vlastuin has agreed to a new three-year deal with the Tigers. Picture: GETTY IMAGES

Hewett muscles up

SYDNEY youngster George Hewett says growing up as the smallest, skinniest kid as a junior has made him a better, more resilient, footballer.

And the Swans have seen enough of the 20-year-old to give him a two-year contract extension until 2018.

"Negotiations only started a couple of weeks ago," Hewett said. "I'm very happy at the club and the Swans were happy to offer me a deal, so we got it done pretty quickly."

Born on December 29, 1995, Hewett often competed against boys almost 12 months older and bigger than him.

"I think it held me in good stead having to cope with

NEIL CORDY

bigger people around me and bigger personalities," he said.

"I was always the smallest and skinniest bloke in the football and cricket teams by quite a bit, but once I started to develop it worked in my advantage.

"The Swans knew I was pretty young and would take some time to develop, but it's worked out in the end."

Hewett, selected in the 2013 draft, made his senior debut in Round 1 this year.

He has played in nine of Sydney's first 10 games, averaging 13 disposals, four tackles and a goal a match.



Sydney's George Hewett

GIANTS BACKMEN TOO BRAVE

GREATER Western Sydney coach Leon Cameron says some of his defenders may be too brave for their own good as he welcomes one of them, co-captain Phil Davis, back to action.

Davis will return for Saturday's clash against Geelong at Simonds Stadium after missing three games with a hamstring injury.

Another defender, Matt Buntine, is confident of playing after sitting out last weekend with concussion.

But the wretched run of luck for Giants defenders isn't over. Adam Kennedy has been ruled out for at least a week with a sore back and

shoulder after landing heavily against Adelaide.

The injury list includes key backs Aidan Corr (ankle, 2-3 weeks), Caleb Marchbank (ankle, four weeks) and Tim Mohr (hamstring 3-5 weeks).

"There are just some naturally born brave players that just have no fear," Cameron said yesterday.

"We're lucky enough to have probably half a dozen in our back half; maybe that's a little answer why we have so many injuries in there.

"But there's also a line where they have got to be able to read the play. As they get a bit older and more experienced, they know

when to go and when not to go. I can't see it happening that Matthew Buntine is going to be pulling out of a contest shortly."

Buntine, who has had three bouts of concussion in a year, wore a helmet at training yesterday. "He's such a brave player, probably too brave for his own good at times," Cameron said.

The coach confirmed Davis could expect to play on Geelong spearhead Tom Hawkins, and possibly Mark Blicavs and resting ruckmen Rhys Stanley and Zac Smith.

"Phil is going to have his work cut out with some big boys," Cameron said.