



Ruthless Suns drop Hall over form slip

SHOCK OMISSION:
Gold Coast's Aaron
Hall. Picture: GETTY

TOM BOSWELL

AFL greats Peter Everitt and Dermott Brereton say Gold Coast coach Rodney Eade has drawn a line in the sand by axing the Suns' most prolific ball user Aaron Hall for Sunday's clash with Richmond.

In a selection shock, Tasmanian Hall was last night dropped to the reserves despite being among the club's best this season, collecting the most disposals (286) ahead of captain Gary Ablett (271) and Dion Prestia (265).

But two quiet games after returning from a shoulder injury resulted in the midfielder being the fall guy for the club's eight-game losing streak with



STATEMENT: Peter Everitt, left, and Dermott Brereton.

Trent McKenzie, Sam Day, Rory Thompson, Sean Lemmens and Matt Shaw added to an extended 25-man squad to face the Tigers at the MCG.

Everitt said Eade's decision proved "no one's really safe" at the Suns, while Brereton added Hall had paid the price for avoiding contact after his shoulder injury.

"He hasn't been running as strong through the lines as he was," Brereton said.

"If you're not an absolute beast and you're sore you tend to avoid contact. You tend to avoid areas that will put you back in danger's way and perhaps Aaron isn't quite running to the traffic or even through the traffic like he has when he has been at his very best."

Hall, 25, drew praise from those within the game for his stunning start to the season and has been given the second highest amount of votes by Suns fans in the race for the club champion award, one vote shy of Tom Lynch.

Hall exceeded 30 possessions in five of the first eight

games of the season, including a career-high 40 disposals against Carlton in Round 3.

But he has suffered a drop-off in the past two weeks, collecting 20 and 19 disposals against West Coast and Sydney respectively.

Everitt said Hall's axing could have been harsh given many of his teammates had suffered longer periods of bad form this season.

"I think he has been the best player over the season so far, especially the first half a dozen rounds when they were going all right," Everitt said.

"Rocket at this time of the year is looking for those little selfless acts like your tackles, your shepherds and all those

1 per centers. If you're not prepared to do those he is probably not prepared to play you.

"That's a good message he is sending to the club. It doesn't matter how many games you've played, if you're not doing the things they ask — and sometimes the basics are the things you ask for — if you're not doing those then you're out."

Eade didn't return phone calls last night but said in a club statement he had made the decision because of Hall's drop in form and to give him confidence again.

"I'm certain he'll be back. He's too good a player to be out for too long and I'm certain he'll be back in very soon."

Deledio brushes off talk of trade

MICHAEL WARNER
and LAUREN WOOD

RICHMOND star Brett Deledio has said he will retire as a one-club player.

The Tigers' 4-7 start to the season has prompted calls for the club's older elite talent to be shopped at the trade table as part of a major overhaul.

But the 238-game dual All-Australian yesterday declared he was a Tiger for life.

"I know I won't be going anywhere. I'm a contracted player for next year and I've always said that I want to be a one-club player," Deledio said.

"From the very first day I got to Richmond, I looked straight away as to how many games Dale Weightman had played in the No.3 and I wanted to try and beat that."

The 29-year-old rejected the need for a rebuilding.

"I don't think there needs to be an overhaul — we just need our players playing consistently well, certainly our leadership group and our senior players," he told RSN.

"But also we just keep challenging the young blokes to keep getting better. The sooner we can get them better, the sooner we play better."

Defender Alex Rance said the players copped a confronting review after last Friday night's thrashing at the hands of North Melbourne.

"There were a lot of glaring mistakes and issues we want to stamp out so they don't become habit," Rance said.

"We probably kick long down the line a bit too much at the moment, which really plays into a lot of other teams' defences hands."

Finals are all but off the table for Richmond, but Rance said there would be "something wrong" if the team did not keep the hope alive.

Skipper Trent Crotchin did not train yesterday due to illness but is expected to play against Gold Coast on Sunday.

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