

One last test for Seedsman

ANDREW CAPEL

ADELAIDE'S Paul Seedsman will undergo a final concussion test today before being cleared to play in tomorrow night's Adelaide Oval blockbuster against unbeaten Sydney.

The former Collingwood midfielder was concussed in the final quarter of last week's win against Richmond and was restricted to light duties at the Crows' main training session on Wednesday.

He has been picked in Adelaide's 22 to take on the Swans, who have named ex-Crow Kurt Tippett to play his first game against his former club in SA, but must prove his fitness when the team trains at The Oval this morning.

"He's got one more test to get through with the doctor," Crows assistant coach Matthew Clarke said of Seedsman. "You usually leave it to the last day (before a game) but all indications are that he is track-

ing really well, so hopefully he gets that one ticked off and will be good to go." Seedsman, averaging 16 disposals in his first three games for Adelaide, is important to the club's fast-paced attacking game. Adelaide has been boosted for the big clash by the return of Showdown Medallist Tom Lynch after his late withdrawal against the Tigers to witness the birth of his second child.

He boosts an already powerful forward line, which is

statistically the most potent in the league after three rounds.

The Crows are averaging 123 points a game, with Sydney third at 119 points.

Riley Knight makes way for Lynch, who kicked six goals in Showdown 40 two weeks ago.

Clarke said skipper Taylor Walker (foot) and David Mackay (calf) would play despite light weeks on the track.

The Swans, who have won all three games they have played at Adelaide Oval and

have beaten the Crows in their past four meetings, have brought in co-captain Jarrad McVeigh for his first game of the season after knee surgery.

PORT Adelaide has been bolstered for its tough clash against GWS in Canberra on Sunday by the return of key playmakers Hamish Hartlett and Chad Wingard from hamstring strains.

Sam Colquhoun also has been added to a 25-man squad. Hartlett and Wingard

trained strongly on Wednesday after missing two and one match respectively.

"I pulled up really well from training and unless something pretty drastic happens in the next couple of days I'll suit up on Sunday," Hartlett said.

The Giants, who are without star forward Jeremy Cameron because of suspension, have lost forwards Devon Smith (knee) and Will Hoskin-Elliott (thigh), along with defender Aidan Corr (ankle).

Power's great haul in China

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But despite AFL boss Gillon McLachlan's statement yesterday a second side was locked in, no team has yet confirmed its involvement.

Expansion teams Gold Coast and Greater Western Sydney say they are willing to take on the Power but clubs were bemused by the deal outlined by Port Adelaide chief executive Keith Thomas — that the Power "would retain all the rights of a home team".

Port Adelaide is adamant it will keep all 11 home games at Adelaide Oval. Rival clubs believe it would take well in excess of \$500,000 compensation to shift a home game and perhaps up to \$800,000.

McLachlan says "the commercial reality of China" will ensure AFL clubs ignore the usual backlash for selling home games. But the AFL boss, who joined Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull in Shanghai yesterday to co-sign the Power's deal in China, adds the real battle in the next six months is reassuring the AFL Commission that Shanghai Stadium can be a safe field.

"The other commercial reality is we have \$20 million of AFL talent that we have to protect on the field," McLachlan said.

"But we will do everything in our control to make this happen. The hurdles we face now are just half the size of the hurdles Port Adelaide has already jumped."

The Power and the AFL are currently culling a parcel of land where it can grow turf for at least six months before transplanting the grass at Shanghai Stadium.

Port Adelaide will be taking AFL premiership games to the northern hemisphere in an AFL first. It will pick up the AFL's international program that so far has amounted to just three Anzac Day games hosted by St Kilda in Wellington, New Zealand from 2013-15 — and abandoned this year.

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CHINESE CONNECTION: Team China captain Chen Shaoliang, 23, joined Port Adelaide on an AFL international scholarship this season before getting injured. Picture: SARAH REED

Port taking AFL to the world, and this is not just a sideshow



MICHELANGELO RUCCI
CHIEF FOOTBALL WRITER

JUST four years ago the AFL Commission was planning to turn the Port Adelaide AFL licence into a travelling footy show — from Adelaide to Alice Springs and Darwin or perhaps Tasmania.

Now Port Adelaide is taking the AFL to China — and this is no sideshow or another exhibition project to rip some commercial dollars out of Shanghai without ever trying to bond with the Chinese.

The AFL's so-called "basket case" of 2012 — that survived on the AFL's need to see out a television contract demanding two teams be based in SA to ensure an AFL game was played in Adelaide each week-end — is now Australian football's passport to the world. China in 2017, India for another AFL club, perhaps Richmond, soon after.

"Remarkable," AFL chief executive Gillon McLachlan said in Shanghai yesterday as the Power signed a major sponsorship deal with a Chinese benefactor offering at least \$1 million a year for the next three seasons.

"Port Adelaide has been on a journey — one of hard work plus vision. They have done very well."

But it is another gimmick — another sideshow — the cynics will say. Australian football has been trying to put its footprint on the world for more than 50 years — and failed.

How can Port Adelaide sell the Australian game to China?

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, in his first international trip, made Port Adelaide and the AFL his first announcement in China.

SA Minister for Investment and Trade, Martin Hamilton-Smith, has had his State Government buy in, understanding

Port Adelaide is not working a "sideshow" for much-needed coin in Shanghai.

"This is an extraordinary turnaround — from the tough times in 2012 to now playing on the international stage. Port Adelaide deserves a pat on the back," Hamilton-Smith said at yesterday's announcements in Shanghai.

Port Adelaide now has to find an opponent willing to give up a home game to play in Shanghai. McLachlan says the commercial realities of doing business in China will make this an easy sell for both the AFL and the Power.

Port Adelaide also has to find a strip of land where it can grow turf in the next six months to then refit the 40,000-capacity Shanghai Stadium to meet AFL standards. This will be more difficult than finding an opponent.

And the Power has to make this deal work beyond a history-making game in Shanghai in May or June next year. The club's new Chinese benefactor, Shanghai Cred founder Gui Guojie, expects it. He will sign three seven-figure cheques — each of at least \$1 million — with demands that stop Port Adelaide turning its "China Strategy" into a sideshow.

Gui, who became caught up in Port Adelaide's big show at Adelaide Oval last year in the season-closer against Fremantle, does not want his company logo on the Power jumper. But he wants the Power to carry the Australian football game — the one that has captured his fascination — to his fellow Chinese with a more than just a "sideshow" game every year. Gui calls it his "gift to China".

"You have an exclusive culture in Australia — 23 million people enjoy your game," Gui told *The Advertiser* in Shanghai. "Why not have one billion people in China enjoy it too. I know it will take a long time. But I am happy to be part of this long journey with Port Adelaide."