

Nick Dal Santo – AFL footballer



Nicholas Peter Dal Santo¹ (born 1984) is a great great great grandchild of Patrick Carrucan and Mary O'Brien and is well known as one of the star players, first for the St. Kilda Football Club (2002-2013) and later for the North Melbourne Football Club (2014-2016) in the Australian Football League.

His vital stats read impressively - height 186cm, weight 86 kg, 322 games played in his 15 seasons of AFL football (2002-2016), 156 goals kicked.

Nick was drafted by St Kilda as draft pick 13 in the 2001 AFL Draft and made his debut for them in 2002 as an 18 year old against the Geelong Football Club. In what was an excellent start to his elite football career, he played 18 matches in that first year.

He came of age as a footballer during the 2004 season, playing every match and kicking 11 goals in a St Kilda side that made a Preliminary Final.

In 2005 he took his game to a new level, racking up over 500 disposals for the year and finishing a close third in the 2005 Brownlow Medal, behind eventual winner Ben Cousins. He was recognised for his excellent season with selection in the 2005 All-Australian Team as a midfielder, his first career All-Australian Team award.

Former Essendon Football Club coach Kevin Sheedy, during the 2005 season, likened Nick to triple-Brownlow Medallist Ian Stewart for his exceptional skill and courage. In that same year, former Hawthorn champion Gary Ayres said this of Nick in an interview: "He's got a high skill level on both sides of his body. He's a good reader of the play, he's got football smarts which are very hard to teach and the thing he does very well is he's got that ability to be composed when he uses the ball. He doesn't seem to get too flustered or rushes it, and that's a

¹ Sourced from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nick_Dal_Santo

pretty special quality to be able to have when you play elite football because a lot of players can get the ball but do they make the right decision?"

In 2007, under new coach Ross Lyon, Nick played match-winning football, notching up 16 Brownlow votes for the year. He also played his 100th consecutive game in Round 20 of 2007, which meant that he had not missed a game since mid-2003. He finished the year with a fourth place finish in the club's Best and Fairest, the Trevor Barker Award.

Nick played in St Kilda's 2008 NAB Cup winning side, the club's third pre-season cup win - the club was finally starting to look a threat.

A member of St Kilda's leadership group, Nick was awarded All-Australian selection for the second time in his career in 2009, a recognition of his strong season. He played in 21 of 22 matches in the 2009 AFL Season home and away rounds in which St Kilda qualified in first position for the 2009 AFL Finals Series, winning the club's third minor premiership. Alas, the final flag eluded the club when St Kilda were beaten by 12 points in the Grand Final. He was recognised for his excellent season with selection in the 2009 All-Australian Team as an interchange player, his second career All-Australian Team award.

Nick continued to play well in 2010, clocking up 25 games, including four final matches, and averaging 25.6 possessions.

In the 2011 season, he came second for the Brownlow Medal with a poll of 28 votes, after averaging 26.5 disposals per round during the premiership season. He was again included in the All Australian Team on the interchange bench. He also came a close second in St Kilda's best and fairest award which recognised his consistency and leadership in the absence of Lenny Hayes.

As of the end of the 2011 season, Nick had played in 17 finals matches, including three grand finals (2009, 2010 drawn and 2010 replay).

In the 2013 season St Kilda won just five games and as he qualified as a free agent at the end of the season, Dal Santo was regularly questioned about his playing future after 2013

In October 2013, he left the Saints for North Melbourne as a restricted free agent after St Kilda declined to match North's three year deal. See video <http://www.nmfc.com.au/video/2013-10-23/dal-pulls-on-the-jumper> as he tries on his new Kangaroos jumper.

Nick had an immediate effect in his first year at North Melbourne, playing every game of the season, including three finals matches. During the semi final against Geelong, he collected 35 disposals and gained 603 metres. He was named as the 'recruit of the year' by AFL Media. In August 2016, North Melbourne announced they would not renew his contract for the 2017 season. After expressing interest in joining another club, he subsequently retired in November.