

CHASING \$IR LANCE - ALOT

WELCOME to the Buddy bidding war. Fremantle coach Ross Lyon has been at pains to point out the Dockers are not actively chasing Hawthorn superstar Lance Franklin.

West Coast has been similarly coy about the prospect of one of WA's own returning to Perth.

But if Buddy does enter the market as a free agent when his contract expires at the end of the season, both clubs will be front and centre.

They simply couldn't afford to ignore the AFL's most marketable player and the choice of many as the best in the competition.

The Sunday Times' GLEN FOREMAN, with the help of sources and official documents, has come up with two plans to lure Franklin back west.

Ultimately, the decision will be Buddy's.

As a restricted free agent, he has the right to field offers from rival clubs and Hawthorn then has to match it.

Fremantle could likely field an offer out of reach of the Hawks while the Eagles would struggle to do so.

However, even if the Hawks do find a way to match it, Franklin's desire to leave could have the Melbourne club thank him for his services and the 2008 premiership and not hold him against his wishes.

This is business after all.

And there's no room for sentiment in football.

HOW FREMANTLE COULD LURE BUDDY

HOW did the Dockers come up with a \$1.1million carrot to Travis Cloke last season?

Fremantle had an important milestone looming in Aaron Sandilands qualifying for veteran status and, with the Dockers still operating on the old veterans' rule, that immediately freed up 50 per cent of the ruckman and captain Matthew Pavlich's salaries for 2013.

The prioritising of contracts would then have likely come in to play, with Cloke among those on top of the list and, interestingly, when the decision was announced on September 27 last year that the Collingwood forward was staying put, a flurry of extensions and signings were announced from Fremantle, starting with Danyle Pearce on October 3, Luke McPharlin on October 4, the elevation and extension of Lee Spurr on October 5, and Adam McPhee on October 22.

A strategy of front-ending, paying more in the initial year than subsequent seasons, would have helped the Dockers reach the minimum spend, while allowing another tilt at this year's free agents, once the payments drop for 2014.

McPhee's retirement could have proven problematic, potentially dropping Fremantle

below the minimum spend, but then the club renegotiated the contracts of Chris Mayne and Zac Dawson in March.

There are a few important players coming out of contract for Fremantle at the end of this year - such as Anthony Morabito, Tendai Mzungu, Zac Clarke and Michael Johnson - which could present an opportunity to free up some more cap space with back-ended deals.

The key for the Dockers in to play, with Cloke among those on top of the list and, interestingly, when the decision was announced on September 27 last year that the Collingwood forward was staying put, a flurry of extensions and signings were announced from Fremantle, starting with Danyle Pearce on October 3, Luke McPharlin on October 4, the elevation and extension of Lee Spurr on October 5, and Adam McPhee on October 22.

What would be troubling for Hawthorn is the players the Dockers will be able to renegotiate with this time around could set them up with a cash pile far greater than they had to spend on Cloke.

The *Sunday Times* understands that Fremantle has more than 20 players whose current deals expire at the end of next year, including Hayden Ballantyne, Nat Fyfe, Matt de Boer and Jon Griffin, but more importantly, Pavlich and Sandilands.

Extending and spreading the next generation's contracts over further seasons could

create a large amount of play money at the port club, while Pavlich and Sandilands could be willing to take a pay cut in the twilight of their careers as premiership success becomes a higher priority than pay.

David Mundy, McPharlin, Johnson and also Paul Duffield qualify as veterans next year and the group would give Fremantle a veterans' allowance of \$710,376 for next season, under the new system.

The salary of Jack Anthony was counted in this year's Total Player Payments for Fremantle as his sacking came after the October 31 list lodgement deadline and that money will also be available for the Dockers to splash at a free agent for inclusion on next season's list.

Anthony's wage combined with the veterans' allowance could already give the Dockers more than \$1million to play with, even before contract talks begin.

ESTIMATED PLAYER EARNINGS

SENIOR LIST	BASE SALARY		ROOKIE LIST	BASE SALARY
Hayden Ballantyne	\$250,000		Haide Schlotthe	\$49,000
Anthony Morabito	\$200,000		Sam Menegola	\$49,000
Zac Dawson	\$220,000		Craig Motter	\$49,000
Jayden Pitt	\$150,000		Matthew Taberner	\$49,000
Garrick Ibbotson	\$200,000		Alex Howson	\$49,000
Danyle Pearce	\$350,000			
Nat Fyfe	\$350,000			
Nick Suban	\$200,000			
Matt de Boer	\$250,000			
Michael Walters	\$150,000			
Tom Sheridan	\$70,325			
Jonathon Griffin	\$250,000			
Tendai Mzungu	\$200,000			
Josh Simpson	\$65,875			
Ryan Crowley	\$250,000			
David Mundy	\$550,000			
Hayden Crozier	\$70,325			
Luke McPharlin	\$400,000			
Alex Forster	\$67,215			
Viv Michie	\$74,445			
Michael Barlow	\$300,000			

BASE + MATCH PAYMENTS \$9,651,910	
VETERAN DEDUCTIONS \$750,000	
50% of up to two players	
2013 Veterans: Matthew Pavlich, Aaron Sandilands	
TOTAL TPP PAYMENTS	\$8,901,910
TOTAL ASA PAYMENTS	\$852,000
GRAND CLUB SPEND	\$9,753,910
CAP SPACE	\$238,090

2013	2014
TOTAL TPP ALLOWANCE	\$9,140,000
TOTAL ASA ALLOWANCE	\$852,000
GRAND TOTAL ALLOWANCE	\$9,992,000
MINIMUM SPEND	\$9,492,400
	\$10,066,504

Digitally enhanced image

HOW WEST COAST COULD LURE BUDDY

ANDREW Embley, in his 15th year at West Coast, has not been installed on the veterans' list this year and that could be a crucial indicator to the Eagles' strategy for a tilt at Franklin or any other free agent.

West Coast opted to switch to the new veterans' rules this year, which came into transitional effect on November 1 and allow clubs to place an unlimited number of players on the veterans' list, increasing from the previous limit of two in a bid to prolong playing careers.

The new rule dropped the 30-year-old age requirement, leaving the only qualifying mark as having devoted 10 years' service to a club, while instead of half of veterans' salaries being omitted from the cap,

clubs are given a certain allowance for every player on the veterans' list.

The Eagles listed their 2012 veterans as captain Darren Glass and ruckman Dean Cox for a total veterans' allowance of about \$550,000 according to *The Sunday Times* calculations, but this year moved to the new system and listed Cox, Glass, Daniel Kerr, Mark Nicoski and Adam Selwood among the group for an allowance of slightly more.

There is no limit to the amount of players who can be listed as veterans under the new system and next year's allowance is \$118,396 per player.

Sam Butler, currently in his 10th year at West Coast, could be added to that group from 2014, as could Embley, freeing up a total of \$928,772 in veterans' allowances.

However, it is interesting that Embley was not classified as a veteran this year and that could have been a deliberate strategy by the Eagles to strike with a larger kitty in 2014, while Mark LeCras and Matt Rosa can join the veterans' list after next year's campaign, further easing the squeeze in later years.

The next step in West Coast's strategy could then be linked to re-signings.

It is understood that the Eagles are one of the

tighter clubs in terms of salary room and *The Sunday Times* lists concur with that, but importantly it is understood 14 players, several of whom are at the higher end of the pay scale, are in the last year of their contract, including Cox, Glass and Embley.

West Coast is in premiership mode and the last time it was building towards such a state, a 25-year-old Ben Cousins took a pay cut so the Eagles could hold on to a teenager named Chris Judd.

The title of "Premiership Captain" could be enticing enough for Glass to make a similar decision when determining his next contract, while Cox and Embley could also step down in the pay scale to free up room, while extending their opportunities for a second career flag.

What they lose in contracts can easily be made up in finals bonuses, which fall outside a club's cap.

The remaining players coming out of contract could then have back-ended deals, with all of the above combining to possibly give West Coast around the \$1million mark to offer Franklin or a free agent.

The Eagles could not match the offer of the Dockers, however, both seem capable of managing million-dollar deals and, when dealing in those numbers, would a couple of hundred-thousand extra make much difference to Franklin?

Particularly when West Coast could offer something Fremantle could not: his best mate Sharrod Wellingham is already at the club.

ESTIMATED PLAYER EARNINGS

SENIOR LIST	BASE SALARY		2013	2014
Mitchell Brown	\$180,000			
Mark LeCras	\$450,000			
Andrew Gaff	\$220,000			
Daniel Kerr	\$450,000			
Brad Sheppard	\$130,000			
Mark Nicoski	\$200,000			
Chris Masten	\$200,000			
Beau Waters	\$350,000			
Nic Naitanui	\$350,000			
Scott Selwood	\$300,000			
Matt Priddis	\$300,000			
Sharrod Wellingham	\$300,000			
Luke Shuey	\$400,000			
Jacob Brennan	\$130,000			
Jamie Cripps	\$140,000			
Eric Mackenzie	\$220,000			
Bradd Dalziel	\$140,000			
Adam Carter	\$56,755			
Dean Cox	\$650,000			
Brant Collidge	\$56,755			
Darren Glass	\$450,000			
Matt Rosa	\$200,000			
Shannon Hurn	\$280,000			
Sam Butler	\$200,000			
Jack Darling	\$250,000			
Ash Smith	\$180,000			
Scott Lyttett	\$140,000			
Blayne Wilson	\$74,445			
Will Schofield	\$220,000			

BASE + MATCH PAYMENTS \$9,547,940	
VETERAN DEDUCTIONS \$561,650	
\$112,330 per eligible player	
2013 Veterans: Dean Cox, Darren Glass, Daniel Kerr, Mark Nicoski, Adam Selwood	
TOTAL TPP PAYMENTS	\$8,986,290
TOTAL ASA PAYMENTS	\$852,000
GRAND CLUB SPEND	\$9,838,290
CAP SPACE	\$153,710

2013	2014
TOTAL TPP ALLOWANCE	\$9,140,000
TOTAL ASA ALLOWANCE	\$852,000
GRAND TOTAL ALLOWANCE	\$9,992,000
MINIMUM SPEND	\$9,492,400
	\$10,066,504

SENIOR LIST	BASE SALARY		ROOKIE LIST	BASE SALARY
Andrew Embley	\$350,000		Cale Morton	\$120,000
Josh Hill	\$180,000		Ashton Hams	\$120,000
Mark Hutchings	\$56,755		Callum Sinclair	\$56,755
Patrick McGinty	\$120,000			
Fraser McInnes	\$67,215			
Adam Selwood	\$270,000			
Murray Newman	\$67,215			
Brad Dick	\$74,445			

WEST COAST

HAWTHORN

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RUCK: 20 Cox 10 S. Selwood 13 Shuey

37 Selwood 19 Gunston 33 Rioli

25 Hurn 33 Rioli

32 Embley 16 Smith

15 Cripps 14 Birchall

26 Butler 5 Sheppard 22 Sinclair 18 Dalziel

23 Glass 2 Roughhead

31 Schofield 23 Franklin

11 Priddis 5 Mitchell

17 Kennedy 24 Stratton

27 Darling 6 Gibson

1 Brown 22 Breust

8 Waters 28 Puopolo

3 Gaff 10 Hill

43 Hams 9 Burguoyne

33 Hill 18 Guerra

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RUCK: 39 Bailey 12 Sewell 3 Lewis

EMG: 14 Brennan 28 Smith 30 Wilson

PATERSONS STADIUM, 2.40PM
TV: FoxFooty from 11am, Channel 7 from 3pm
West Coast \$1.90 Hawthorn \$1.90

EMG: 32 Simpkin 27 Spangher 21 Savage

TIPS

BRADEN QUARTERMAINE (ST) West Coast by 19pts
GLEN QUARTERMAIN (ST) Hawthorn by 6pts
GLEN FOREMAN (ST) West Coast by 11pts
KARL LANGDON (ST) Hawthorn by 19pts
MARK READINGS (CH9) West Coast by 4pts

Young Eagle's game of tag

GLEN FOREMAN

ANDREW Gaff's leanest return last year was 15 touches and the West Coast bolter knew exactly who restricted him when asked if he remembered: "Yeah, Hawthorn. (Liam) Shiels followed me around all day."

The Hawks went on to win by 25 points in the final round of the regular season, avoiding a post-season rematch.

It was a rare slow day at the office for Gaff, whose outside run and carry was a strong asset for West Coast and had him average 25 touches in just his second season at the elite level.

The 20-year-old said he had learnt to expect closer attention from opponents and was embracing another opportunity to tackle the Hawks today.

"It was a very good learning experience and I'll be better for it, hopefully I'll be better than that," Gaff said.

"I've had a couple of players follow me during games, but that's expected at AFL level.

"Myself and Luke (Shuey), Scotty Selwood and all those blokes, we've got to improve and shrug those opponents.

"Whoever they want to go with: Shuey, (Matt) Priddis, Scotty Selwood, if one bloke's getting run-with, they expect to be helped out and I'm sure the other midfielders will perform well, seeing as they're off the chain. These things happen in football and we've got to deal with them."

Gaff's impact on West Coast's 2012 was highlighted by his top-five absence from only two of the club's 12 key statistical areas - contested marks and tackles - but he revealed the inside aspect of his game could be set for a boost, having added some weight in preparation for a presence on ball.

It is an area West Coast must be wary of today as ruckman Callum Sinclair makes his debut in the Eagles' second-consecutive match without leading hand Nic Naitanui.

Gaff said Sinclair had the full-faith of the Eagles and had developed a good chemistry with the midfielders in recent months.

"I've put on a couple of kilos to hopefully play a bit more in the middle and be a bit more versatile, which is important for any player," Gaff said.

Kerr finishes strongly

WEST Coast champion midfielder Daniel Kerr, right, took a massive step towards returning to the AFL arena at East Fremantle Oval yesterday and may have earned himself a place in the side to tackle Melbourne on Saturday.

Kerr impressed in collecting 17 possessions in the second half of his WAFL hit-out in the Sharks' 69-point win over Subiaco.

It was his first hitout for the year, having missed the entire NAB Cup and the Round 1 Western Derby loss to Fremantle due to a knee injury.

While Kerr's second half was impressive, it took him some time to get into the game.

He was initially made to wait before he joined the contest, sitting on the sidelines for the

first 14 minutes while the initial run went out of the game.

Kerr had four sprints on the ground in the first half, of between about seven and 11 minutes and collected just six possessions.

While he looked very much in

need of a run, Kerr still hit several packs hard when he was in the vicinity of a contest and was the player at the bottom of a pack on a couple of occasions.

It was probably good that Kerr was a little off his game early, as he narrowly missed cleaning up Subiaco's Jason Bristow in the first term in an incident that would potentially have been looked at by umpires.

Given much more time on the ground in the second half, Kerr won the first centre clearance after half-time and went on with it from there. He finished with 23 touches and a goal.