

# Unbeaten Bulldogs get boost up front

By Dan O'Sullivan

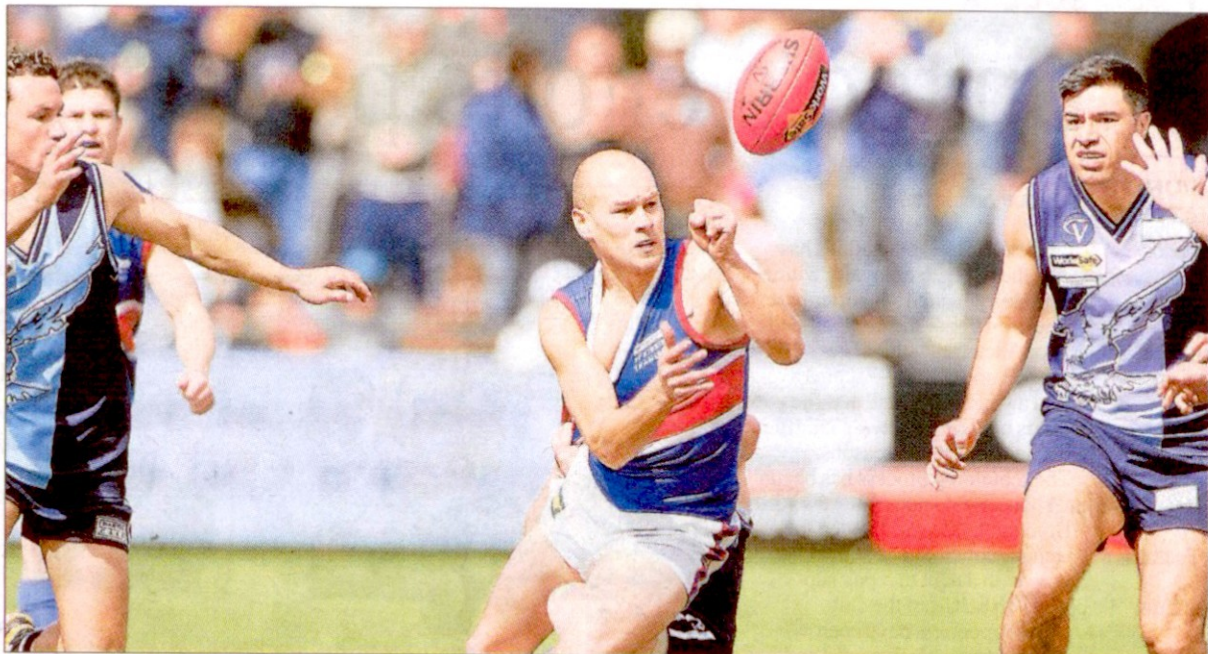
GISBORNE'S dream start to the season in the Bendigo Football League is set to be bolstered by the return of former captain and league medallist **Luke Saunders**.

The Bulldogs have set a furious pace for 2009 with a perfect 6-0 start, and now the forward line is to be strengthened by the return of the talismanic Saunders from a stint at Port Adelaide in the SANFL.

**Coach Ty Elliott** said: "Luke's return will be great for the younger guys in our team. He's a great leader and his attack at the football is just ferocious.

"We've been falling down in front of goals at times this year, so he'll be great across centre half-forward."

The struggles in the forward half of the ground troubled Elliott in the early stages



**Boom addition:** Luke Saunders pictured during the side's two-point loss in the 2007 Bendigo Football League grand final.

of the year and, despite his team's unblemished record, there seems to be plenty of scope for improvement. "Even though we won against Strathsfieldsaye, we didn't play the way we really wanted to play. I guess it's a testament to our defence and midfield that we have managed to win games this year without completely firing up forward," Elliott said.

Elliott has been well served by an experienced line-up down back including **Rodney Sharpe, Matthew MacKenzie** and **Cameron Medica**, who have combined with **Josh Bain** to restrict the opposition to an average of 55 points.

Such an enviable defensive record may go some way to explaining the club's remarkable home record, a winning streak

that has reached 33 games.

Meanwhile, Elliott has called on the league to come down hard on players and clubs that refuse to take representative football seriously.

GISBORNE fielded a number of players for Bendigo in the match against Ballarat, but Elliott fears some clubs and players are not fully committed.