

A LEAGUE OF THEIR OWN



A **STUDY GUIDE** BY KATY MARRINER



<http://www.metromagazine.com.au>



SCREEN
AUSTRALIA

<http://www.theeducationshop.com.au>



‘We were invited to become the eighth team in the Northern Territory Football League. Today we are living a dream that was first dreamt by our grandfathers. That dream was to have a Tiwi side play in the Darwin competition, the Tiwi Bombers.’

– Thomas Simon

This study guide to accompany *In A League Of Their Own* has been written for middle and senior secondary students. It provides information and suggestions for learning activities in English, Health, Health and Human Development, Humanities, Media, Physical Education, VET Sport and Recreation and curriculum projects exploring contemporary Indigenous Australia.

In A League Of Their Own is a three-part documentary series. Each episode runs for approximately twenty-six minutes.

About *In A League Of Their Own*

In A League Of Their Own follows Australia’s first all-black football team through their first season in the big league in 2007 and 2008. After more than thirty years of running their own competition in a remote island community off the coast of Darwin, the Tiwi Bombers set out to prove that their fast intuitive style of football can beat the long established teams of the Northern Territory Football League (NTFL).

From the outset there is opposition from the other clubs as their top Tiwi players are signed to the Tiwi Bombers. It looks like a Tiwi dream team will come together to annihilate the established clubs. After a long winning streak through the first half of the season the Tiwi Bombers appear to be unbeatable. But there are unseen dangers lurking behind their apparent success. The young players’ commitment to steer clear of drugs and alcohol is severely tested. Riding high on success they lose their resolve and attendance at training drops. Their

winning streak comes to an end and they struggle to maintain their place in the top four teams.

The tropical rains begin and the dirt roads that connect the communities turn to mud. Getting the team together to train is more difficult than ever. The players and their mentors look to the past and the strength of their tribal ancestors for inspiration. The captains and coaches remind the younger players that they have inherited this opportunity from the decades of struggle by their fathers and grandfathers.

The Tiwi Bombers make a last ditch effort to make it into the finals series. After losing their first finals game, it comes down to one game. The pressure is unbearable. The weather couldn’t be worse. Training is almost impossible. The highly emotional climax to this journey is unavoidable. The cost of their inexperience and lack of discipline is crushing for the players and the club but the message for the Tiwi Islands community is to get back up and fight another day.



Episode Guide

Episode One

The Tiwi Brand

The Tiwi Islands, a group of three tiny Aboriginal communities spread across two islands off the coast of Darwin, are a prolific producer of top grade footballers. When the community is given the opportunity to field a side they decide it is time to break with tradition and create their own Tiwi Island dream team.

Their admission to the competition is not without controversy as many of the established Darwin clubs are bristling at having some of their top players poached to play for the Tiwi side. There is also dissent amongst the Tiwi ranks from stalwarts loyal to the St Marys team, which was established just after World War Two specifically to cater for Tiwi players.

Drugs and alcohol are considered as the major threat to the team's history-making objective. The pre-season pep talks include an all day workshop on drug and alcohol management and at the end of the day the players pledge themselves to abstinence from drugs and strict limits on their drinking.



Episode Two

Top of the Ladder

The Tiwi Bombers are riding high after a run of wins that has put them at the top of the ladder. Their reputation for fast, intuitive football has seen them take on the best that the Darwin competition has to offer and to walk away with easy victories. An unexpected side effect of their long winning streak becomes evident as discipline lapses. There is poor attendance at training and a number of players, including the leadership group, break their commitment to manage their alcohol use and abstain from drugs.

Geography is another obstacle. The squad is made up of players from three different communities separated by hundreds of kilometres of dirt roads that in the wet season turn to mud and become impassable. Although the club is backed by some serious sponsorship, most of it goes on airfares getting the players to Darwin every weekend to play. They have also hired in two 'talls' from Queensland (tall players to compete in the ruck for the high balls). These players are based in Darwin and fly out to the Tiwi Islands once a week to train with the squad.

As we approach mid-season the press and the crowds are becoming highly critical of the Tiwi Bombers and the players and club officials react to the lack of support. The Tiwi Bombers are losing their grip and it starts to show on the scoreboard.

Episode Three

The Finals

A crisis looms large when the Tiwi Bombers' previous invincibility eludes them. Too much drinking and not turning up for training has seen them slide from the unbeatable team to a ragged mob struggling to hold onto their spot in the finals. Club officials are deeply worried about the team's prospects as they enter the finals.

When the Tiwi Bombers make it to the second round of the finals their coaching staff, their supporters and their families are all on the edge of their seats wondering if they can pull off the dream of making it to the Grand Final in their first year of competition. It's a hair-raising ride and at the end of the day the players are the only ones who can determine their fate.

On the Thursday night after training some of the players can't resist the rare opportunity for a night on the town. They hit the nightclub strip in Darwin and turn up for training next day trying hard to hide their hangers. It happens again on the Friday night, the night before their sudden death semi-final. With the two co-captains Edward Darcy and Thomas Simon carrying injuries and the squad in disarray things don't look good for the Tiwi dream team.

- Detailed episode synopses can be found at <http://www.inaleague-oftheirown.com.au>.



About the filmmaker

Steven McGregor | Director

Steven McGregor's previous credits as a director include *My Brother Vinnie* (2006), *5 Seasons* (2004), *Cold Turkey* (2002), *De-evolution* (2001), *The Watchers* (2000) and *Willigens Fitzroy* (2000).

Director's Statement

Growing up as a kid in Darwin I always went to the Umpires Carnival which heralded the start of the AFL football season in Darwin. The attraction? To watch the Tiwi Island footballers. Every year they sent a team to Darwin to compete and people would flock to their games. Their pace, their flair and the screamers (high marks) they took held us in awe. During the half time breaks, me and my cousins would go onto the oval for a kick and throw screamers trying to emulate the Tiwi



Islander footballers. The way they played, was how football should be played.

My mother and six of her thirteen brothers and sisters grew up on the Tiwi Islands, at Garden Point on Melville Island. She was taken there to be raised by the Catholic Church. My mother says she has some of her best and worst memories from growing up on the mission but the ones she cherishes most are the friendships she made with the other children. Friendships that endure to this day, as my mother says, 'We were the only family we had.'

The Tiwi Islands and football have been a part of me all my life and when

I was approached to direct the series I jumped at it. It was an opportunity to celebrate the passion that the Tiwi Islanders have for the game and attempt to illustrate where this passion comes from. I could use a lot of big words to try to explain how the Tiwi people feel about football but I won't, they are mad for the game.

The perfect vehicle for this exploration was the admittance of a Tiwi side in the Darwin competition, the Tiwi Bombers. In season 2007–2008 they made their debut. High expectations were held for them, they might win the premiership in their first season. A feat that has never been achieved in Darwin let alone around Australia.

A Hollywood ending, could they do it? For me this created drama, we had a stake. In the minds of the players this is their pre-determined destiny, this is their birthright, come to the mainland and flog all the 'pretty boy Darwin sides'. This dramatic element established the style the series would take. I approached it in a dramatic form, the three-act structure. The first episode would be the set up, the second the emotional journey and the third the resolution.

In terms of point of view, I wanted it to come from the players in the side and we needed characters who were able to be articulate but also hold currency within the framework of the team and the Tiwi Islands. Our main storyteller is the captain Thomas Simon who is supported by his co-captain Edward





Darcy. These two men have grown up with each other, as Thomas says, 'He used to come around my house and steal my toys'. There is a bond that is evident on the screen. There are other support characters who underpin the story and deal with issues that impact on the team structure but Thomas and Edward are the primary voices.

While we wanted to celebrate the Tiwi Bombers it was important to look at football in a social context and how the players are seen as role models. Rather than have a plethora of talking head experts from outside the team structure I wanted it to come from within the team. The team is a microcosm of the Tiwi Islands and I felt we could explore the social issues of substance abuse within the team structure and their journey over the course of the season. *The Tiwi Islands* is a paradise but beneath the surface lays problems that beset most Indigenous communities around Australia. We explore these issues through our main characters, which imbues the stories with truth. No talking head experts but from within.

I didn't want this series to be another story about 'poor drunken Aboriginals'. We have enough of those. While not shying away from substance abuse issues and youth suicide I wanted to make a story which will inspire people, inspire kids. Not one which tells them how fucked their life is. I want kids to watch this and say, 'That's deadly, I want to go and throw some screamers'. There is room for stories where we can celebrate and be entertained; this is one of those stories.

We followed the team through the season and spent time with them

on their homelands capturing them at work and play, work being on the football field. After a shaky start the Tiwi Bombers became the team to beat, but then things started to slide and they got a bit cocky and then the critics kicked in having their ten cents worth. Which I suppose is understandable as not everyone was happy with the inclusion of the Tiwi Bombers. The perception that the Bombers received thousands of dollars and enviable draft concessions was hotly debated amongst officials from other Darwin clubs. So the season had everything. Did they win the grand final? You'll have to watch the series.

- Source: <<http://www.inaleagueofthetown.com.au>>.

Tiwi Islands

The Tiwi Islands are situated eighty kilometres north of Darwin in the Arafura Sea. There are two islands, Bathurst Island and Melville Island with a total land mass of 8320 square kilometres.

The first permanent European settlement on the islands was a British military fort established in 1824. Five years later the British abandoned the fort. In 1911 Francis Xavier Gsell established a Roman Catholic Mission at Nguiu in 1911. The mission still plays an active part in the life of most Tiwi Islanders today.



The Tiwi Islands are now an Aboriginal Reserve, and all businesses on the island are Tiwi owned, The Tiwi Islands Local Government oversees the management of the four communities on the Tiwi Islands. Four Community Management Boards, representing Nguiu, Pirlangimpi, Milikapiti and Wurankuwu, advise the Tiwi Islands Local Government about the running of their communities.

Nguiu

Nguiu with a population of approximately 1450 people is located on the south east corner of Bathurst Island.

Pirlangimpi

Pirlangimpi with a population of approximately 335 people is located on the north-west coast of Melville Island.

Milikapiti

Milikapiti with a population of approximately 400 people is located on the northern coast of Melville Island.

Wurankuwu

Wurankuwu Outstation with a population of approximately fifty people is located about fifty kilometres west of Nguiu on Bathurst Island.



Team Players

Thomas Simon - Co-Captain

Thomas Simon was born on the Tiwi Islands and grew up at Milikapiti on Melville Island. He has always been a keen footballer and was recruited into the Palmerston under-14 team at the age of twelve. Simon played for Palmerston Magpies during his school days and represented the Northern Territory several years running in the Territory Thunder under-18 side. After finishing school he spent two years playing in a regional competition in western Victoria before returning to Milikapiti for the birth of his first son in 2001. After a year away from football, Simon spent two seasons back with the Palmerston Magpies before being recruited by Darwin's Wanderers Club. He joined the Tiwi Bombers in 2006 for their trial season and was voted Co-Captain of the Tiwi Bombers by his team mates at the start of the 2007/2008 season. Simon recently moved to nearby Goulbourn Island after quitting his job as an Aboriginal Community Police Officer. He lives there with his wife and three children and travels to Bathurst Island once a week for training.



Edward Darcy - Co-Captain

Edward Darcy was born and raised at Milikapiti on Melville Island. He followed his best mate Thomas Simon into the Palmerston juniors and played alongside Simon in the Territory Thunder representative side for several years in the late 1990s. After finishing school, Darcy won a Football Scholarship with Essendon Football Club and spent a year in Melbourne before playing for Werribee in the VFL. After being sidelined with an injury he returned to the Tiwi Islands and ended up playing for Palmerston until the Tiwi Bombers club was formed in 2006. At the start of the 2007/2008 season Darcy was voted Co-Captain of the Tiwi Bombers. He lives at Milikapiti with his wife. Their first child was born during the Tiwi Bombers' first full season in the Darwin competition. Darcy has completed an apprenticeship with Great Southern Plantations who run a large-scale forestry operation on Melville Island.

Brenton Toy - General Manager

Brenton Toy was born and bred in Darwin and was introduced to football at a young age by his parents who coached juniors for North Darwin, later to become the Palmerston Magpies. Young Toy played for St Marys juniors throughout his school years and went on to play for St Marys first grade where he was considered a solid performer. After retiring as a player he remained involved in the club and coached junior sides for a number of years. Toy has been a member of the



coaching staff of the Territory Thunder under-18s representative side for several years, a role in which he continues today. He was closely involved in the establishment of the Tiwi Bombers Football Club and became the inaugural General Manager once the club was established. In mid-2008 Toy was appointed Coach of the Tiwi Bombers.

Greg Orsto - Coach

Gawin Tipiloura - Assistant Coach

Maurice Rioli - Mentor and Assistant Coach

Maurice Rioli won consecutive grand final Simpson Medals with South Fremantle in 1980 and 1981. His Victorian Football League (VFL) career with Richmond saw him play a total of 118 games and kick eighty goals between 1982 and 1987. His performance in a losing Richmond grand final side



against Carlton earned him the 1982 Norm Smith Medal. Twice voted Richmond's fairest and best player, he ran second in the 1983 Brownlow to Ross Glendinning. Rioli played interstate football for both Western Australia and the Northern Territory, and achieved the comparatively rare distinction of gaining All Australian selection with both teams.

Using *In A League Of Their Own* in the classroom

Teachers may select from the following information and activities to support students' viewing and close analysis of *In A League Of Their Own*.

Before viewing *In A League Of Their Own*

- Football. Love it or loathe it? Where do you stand? Why?
- Why play football?
- *'Football, sport, brings people together.'*

– Maurice Rioli

- Do you agree?
- What does it mean to be in a league of one's own? Write your own story of being in a league of one's own.

After viewing *In A League Of Their Own*

- Did you enjoy the series?
- What is the significance of the title of the series?
- What are the central concerns of *In A League Of Their Own*?
- Create an A3 collage of words and images that offers a response to an idea explored in *In A League Of Their Own*. Use these responses to compose a class mural that reveals the concerns of the documentary.
- What tagline would you use to promote *In A League Of Their Own*?

Close Analysis

Episode by Episode

- Write a synopsis of each episode of *In A League Of Their Own* for a television guide.
- Allow students to work as individuals or in small groups to create an analysis of each episode.
- Compile a list of key quotations from *In A League Of Their Own*. Make sure that the list is revealing of the series' situations, participants and concerns.
- The Tiwi Islands
- *In A League Of Their Own* takes the viewer to the Tiwi Islands. Find this location on a map of Australia. Use print and electronic texts to find out more about the location.
- What's life like on the Tiwi Islands? Draw on the words and images of the series to construct your response.
- How has the history of white settlement shaped life on the Tiwi Islands?

'Life on the Tiwi Islands isn't perfect, we have our problems. Alcohol and drugs has had a devastating effect on our community.'

– Thomas Simon

The Tiwi Islands in recent times was known for having the nation's highest suicide rate.

Thomas Simon speaks of the high rate of suicide on the Tiwi Islands. Thomas has clearly experienced the pain of losing peers to suicide. Conscious of the pressures of a modern society and how these pressures affect people ill prepared to cope, Thomas is grateful that he has not fallen victim.

As a Tiwi Bomber, Thomas accepts that he and his fellow players have a part to play in tackling the islands' social problems but he believes that the elders of the Tiwi Islands have the knowledge and wisdom to make a difference.

Essendon Football Club sponsors the Tiwi Bombers. The Melbourne based Australian Football League club provided jumpers for the team and the team adopted the 'Bombers' moniker.



Essendon Football Club aims to strengthen communities through sport and its affiliation with the Tiwi Bombers is an example of a partnership that aims to do exactly that. Essendon Football Club is proud to have the Tiwi Bombers as an affiliate club.

- Two things matter on the Tiwi Islands: football and art. The annual Tiwi Art Footy Sale celebrates both. The sale is organised by the Tiwi Art Network, an alliance of the three art centres on the islands; Jilamara Arts and Craft, Tiwi Design and Munupi Arts and Crafts. Art is an important aspect of Tiwi Island life. Visit the website of the Tiwi art network to view the art centres' online galleries at <http://www.tiwiart.com>.
- How do the stories told in *In A League Of Their Own* influence your understanding of belonging and community? Endorse your response with specific evidence from the series.

EPISODE	HIGHS	LOWS
Episode 1		
Episode 2		
Episode 3		



SEASON 2007/2008
Round 1: 13 October 2007
Tiwi Bombers v St Marys
Round 11: 22 December 2007
Tiwi Bombers v Nightcliff
Round 15: 26 January 2008
Tiwi Bombers v St Marys
Round 16: 2 February 2008
Tiwi Bombers v Palmerston
Round 17: 9 February 2008
Tiwi Bombers v Palmerston
Round 17: 9 February 2008
Tiwi Bombers v Southern Districts
Qualifying Final: 23 February 2008
Tiwi Bombers v St Mary's
1st Semi-final: 1 March 2008
Tiwi Bombers v Waratah

More than a game

Football is serious business in the Tiwi Islands. The Tiwi Island Football League (TIFL) fields eight teams each season.

The Tiwi Islands is said to have the highest participation rate of any community in Australia in Australian Rules Football. At present about 500 Tiwi Islanders play in regular football competitions arranged for boys and girls and for men and women on both Melville and Bathurst Islands.

- *'For Tiwi Island people football is a religion.'*
– Thomas Simon
- Compile a list of moments and statements that prove this claim to be true?
- What does football offer the people of the Tiwi Islands?
- Newspaper articles from the time when the Tiwi Bombers joined the NTFL offer an insight into the importance of football for the Tiwi island community. Read 'A team in big league kickstarts hope on troubled Tiwi Islands' at <http://www.smh.com.au/news/>

national/a-team-in-big-league-kickstarts-hope-on-troubled-tiwi-islands/2006/10/12/1160246262878.html>.

- More than just a footy match, the Tiwi Island Football League's grand final day is a massive gathering of Tiwi Islanders and mainland Australians. It is the biggest day on the Tiwi Islands calendar.
- What do the images reveal about the community and their devotion to football?
- Read 'Life Cycle' by the Australian poet Bruce Dawe. Dawe's poem describes how Australian Rules Football influences the existence of ordinary Australians. Do you think Dawe's view of football and its fans is valid? Is footy like a religion to you? Write a short piece of prose or poetry that reveals your view of whether Australian Rules Football is worth following.
- Work with others to organise and lead a forum about the importance of football at a local level.

The players

'We wear this guernsey with pride.'

– Thomas Simon

- What's in it for the players? As a class, identify and discuss how the players benefit from being on the team.
- What does *In A League Of Their Own* tell us about the value of team sport?
- What moments prove Thomas Simon and Edward Darcy's dedication to the team? Do you think their efforts are instrumental in keeping the team on track?

The coaches

'They have got to be accountable.'

– Maurice Rioli

- What is the role of a coach? Create a list of the characteristics and skills of a respected coach?
- What demands and difficulties do Greg Orsto, Gawin Tipiloura and Maurice Rioli face as coaches of the Tiwi Bombers? What do you learn about their commitment to the team?
- Watch the coaches' addresses. Imagine you are the coach of a sporting team. Write the pre-match address you would give, drawing on content and language that is meant to motivate your team to achieve.



Team 1: Your task is to argue that footballers are not good role models.

Team 2: Your task is to argue that footballers are good role models.

Each team takes it in turns to present their views to the class in the manner of a debate.

You should draw on *In A League Of Their Own*, other texts and real world examples to prove your claims.

Tradition

'You've got a reputation to live up to, names before you who have played well.'

– Maurice Rioli

'To play St Marys in our first game was hard. With our shared history it was just like playing family.'

– Thomas Simon

Brother John Pye is credited with introducing the Tiwi Islanders to football in the 1940s. The St Marys football club was established in 1951. The club was established to give Tiwi men working in Darwin an avenue to play football. It was regarded as a given – if you were from the Tiwi Islands you played for St Marys. It is a history that the Tiwi Bombers are proud of.

'They should have stayed with their own club, really, because St Mary's was formed for the Tiwi people.'

– Jack Long

Have the Tiwi Bombers betrayed St Marys as Jack Long suggests?

Questions to consider:

- *'You can see the skill level of the Tiwi Bombers is better than any other team in the competition.'*

– Commentator

What style of football do the Tiwi bombers play? Watch the match play and training sessions, consider the views of the coaches and listen to the views of the commentators to help shape your response.

- How good are the Tiwi Bombers? Create a sports report that evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of the team.
- Based on the games shown and the views expressed by the team, coaches, club officials and commentators, write a review of the Bombers' season.
- Winners are grinders
- *'We've worked too hard to get here and we are not going to throw it away.'*

– Thomas Simon

- Up for discussion:

Using the panel format of most television shows about football, create a discussion of victory and defeat.

- Why do the Tiwi Bombers want to win?
- Are the Tiwi Bombers tough enough to win?
- How do the Tiwi Bombers celebrate victory?
- How do the Tiwi Bombers face defeat?

Role Models

'We're footballers, but we're Tiwi islanders first, we're role models for the next generation.'

– Thomas Simon

- Do you think the Tiwi Bombers are role models for others?
- Kick to kick:
- Divide the class into two teams.



The dream team

'Just imagine if we were in the NTFL, that's the stuff we would say to each other when we were kids and now we're here.'

'We knew that no one else could make our dream a reality. It was up to us. History was ours for the taking.'

– Thomas Simon

Over the last ten years, Tiwi Islanders have broken with tradition and started to play with other Darwin clubs by choice or because they were recruited. In 2006, the time arrived for a Tiwi side to stand on its own two feet and field a team in the Darwin competition.

- Use the following statements to discuss why the Tiwi Islanders wanted a team of their own.

'It's been a long time coming. For the Tiwi Bombers to become a reality in our generation is just awesome.'

'We are living the dream of our grandfathers and wear this jumper with pride.'

'We've all grown up together and to be part of this team means living our dream, a dream we share with our community.'

– Thomas Simon

- Brenton Toy claims that the Tiwi Bombers bring 'something unique' to the NTFL. Do you agree?



The challenges

'At the moment we're probably the only club that has to spend one hundred and twenty thousand dollars a year on airfares ... it's not as if we've gone out to sponsors and taken money off other clubs ... the money that the Bombers have brought in ... is new money.'

– Brenton Toy

'Darwin sides train as a team two to three times a week. We train as a full squad once a week, at Nguuu on Bathurst Island. We'd like to get together more but it's basically impossible.'

– Thomas Simon

'Our blokes come from three communities spread over two island covering 8,000 square kilometre. It's not ideal but it's our reality. For me and the other players from Melville Island it's a two hour round trip by car and boat.'

– Thomas Simon

'Then we've got Darwin based players flying over every few weeks to train with us. On game day it's the same story. Traveling here, flying to Darwin, play and then fly back.'

– Thomas Simon

'... we come from clans and we come from tribes and stuff and we've got responsibilities over here as well ... we've got huge responsibilities, you know, to represent our families well. Whether it's through our culture or through football.'

– Thomas Simon

'... we've got to be tougher ...'

– Maurice Rioli

- Use these claims to initiate a discussion of the challenges that face the club and the players.

The opposition

'You could really call them the modern day franchise ...'

– Adrian Moscheni

Some claim that the Tiwi Islands have had an easy ride into the competition.

- The Tiwi Bombers have their critics. How do they regard the Tiwi Bombers? Are their criticisms valid? Consider the opinions of the following people in shaping your response:
- Mark Motlap – Nightcliff coach
- Jack Long – former St Marys player
- Adrian Moscheni – St Marys president



- Vic Ludwig – former St Marys president
- How do the players react to the criticism?
- The Tiwi Bombers compete against Darwin, Nightcliff, Palmerston, Southern Districts, St Marys, Wanderers and Waratah in the NTFL.

Work with others to find out more about one of the clubs. Use PowerPoint to present an overview of the club that your group has selected. Begin your research by visiting: http://www.fullpointsfooty.net/afl_northern_territory.htm

Hall of fame

The Tiwi Islands have produced Australian Football League (AFL) players including Maurice Rioli, Dean Rioli, Michael Long, Edmund Johnson and David Kantilla.

Austin Wonaeamirri created his own piece of football history when he became the first Tiwi Bomber to be drafted to an AFL club. Originally from the community of Milakapiti on Melville Island, about 100km north of Darwin, Wonaeamirri has joined the Melbourne Demons.

- Find out more about the Tiwi Islanders who have played in the AFL. Compile a set of football cards that provide a profile of each man's sporting achievements.

Off field

'I suppose it's a big responsibility, it's off field as well, you know, getting the boys ready during the week you know, and getting them to training and basically getting them to look after themselves.'

– Edward Darcy

'Alcohol is a problem.'

– Brenton Toy

'It's up to us to learn from our mistakes, both on and off the field as well.'

– Thomas Simon

- The Tiwi Bombers devise their own code of conduct. Do you think it is a wise idea to institute a set of rules to regulate player behaviour off the field? Do the players take the code seriously?
- What temptations come with success?

Go hard or go home

'It's do or die.'

– Edward Darcy

'We want the grand final. It has never been achieved by a team in its first season.'

– Thomas Simon

Do you think the Tiwi Bombers are ambitious?

Just before Christmas the team's fortunes falter. The Tiwi Bombers realise that they can't coast through the season.

- What goes wrong for the Tiwi Bombers?
- *'Our whole season came down to this one game. We win we have another chance, we lose it's all over.'*

'Looking back on the season it was a long one. We had expectations of winning the flag in our first season but we didn't, better sides beat us on the day, and to be honest we weren't committed enough, simple as that.'

– Thomas Simon

Do you think the pressure to win a grand final weighs too heavily on the Tiwi Bombers season? Do the Tiwi Bombers buckle under pressure? Were their expectations too high or did the football community's high expectations compromise the team's success?

Production Values

- As a class, discuss the demands of making a documentary series like *In A League Of Their Own*.
- What questions would you like to ask



Steven McGregor, the director of *In A League Of Their Own*?

- View the opening sequence of each episode. What does the opening sequence of each episode tell us about *In A League Of Their Own*? How are you positioned as a viewer?
- What is the role of the narrator in *In a League of Their Own*? Why do you think the filmmaker chose Thomas Simon to narrate the story of the Tiwi Bombers? Was it a successful decision?
- Why do you think the filmmaker included the locker room scenes?
- Why do you think the camera draws our attention to the ceremony poles?
- Why do you think the filmmaker shows some of the players getting back to basics by trading football for fishing?
- What part does music play in *In A League of Their Own*? Do you find the filmmaker's choices effective?
- Listen to the lyrics of Brothablack's '*Are you with me out there*'. Why do you think the filmmakers used this song?
- Why do you think the filmmaker makes reference to past and current policies and practices of white Australia in regard to Australia's indigenous population?
- As a class, view a sequence from an episode of *In A League Of Their Own*.
Describe the setting and action of this sequence.
What is the tone of this sequence? How is it created?
What is the effect of certain shots in this sequence?
What does sound contribute to this sequence?
How does this sequence contribute to our knowledge and understanding of the individuals involved in this sequence?
What important ideas are highlighted in this sequence?

Extended Responses

- '*Football is part of the lifeblood of the Tiwi Islands.*' Discuss.
- Spend some time researching the

qualities of a review. Write a review of *In A League Of Their Own* that would appear in a television guide.

- Draw on the format of a football record to compile a detailed document about the Tiwi Bombers.
- Write a team song for the Tiwi Bombers. In doing so, consider the purpose of a team song. What music or tune would you set your lyrics to?
- Write a feature article about a team in your area's local football league. Before you begin writing, decide on the publication that will feature your article. When you have made your decision, think about your likely audience and the format of your article. Use vocabulary and adopt a tone that best suits the publication that you have chosen. Locate appropriate images to include in your article. Ask your teacher to act as your editor and don't forget to devise an attention demanding headline.
- Spend time talking to people who have played, coached and supported football at a local level. Film the interviews and edit the interviews to create a short documentary.
- Premiere the class documentary at a school assembly.
- Do you think that there should be an AFL team based in the Northern Territory? Debate this subject in class.
- '*Game day is always hard, the nerves kick in, you try to keep yourself busy, listen to music, chill out with the lads, anything to take your mind off the game, but it's always there simmering just below the surface ...*'

– Thomas Simon

Have you ever experienced the anxiety that Thomas acknowledges is part and parcel of game day? Create a piece of writing that describes the occasion and how you felt.



DVD Extras

The *In A League Of Their Own* DVD provides Educational Resources to extend students' knowledge and understanding of how to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Online

<http://www.inaleagueoftheirown.com.au>

The *In A League Of Their Own* website provides information about the series, as well as access to information about nutrition, exercise and lifestyle issues, a Heroes Gallery and music video clips.

- Spend a lesson exploring the *In A League Of Their Own* website. Discuss what you discover with a partner.

References

- In A League Of Their Own press release, 2009.
- In A League Of Their Own post-production scripts, 2009.
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiwi_Bombers
- http://www.fullpointsfooty.net/afl_northern_territory.htm
- <http://www.inaleagueoftheirown.com.au>
- <http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/a-team-in-big-league-kickstarts-hope-on-troubled-tiwi-islands/2006/10/12/1160246262878.html>
- <http://www.tiwiart.com>



This study guide was produced by **ATOM**. (©ATOM)
editor@atom.org.au

For more information on **SCREEN EDUCATION** magazine,
or to download other free study guides,
visit **<<http://www.metromagazine.com.au>>**.

For hundreds of articles on Film as Text, Screen Literacy,
Multiliteracy and Media Studies,
visit **<<http://www.theeducationshop.com.au>>**.



SCREEN
AUSTRALIA