

A COUNTRY KID AT HEART

Hard-working Demon midfielder Bernie Vince is proud of his rural roots.

Bernie Vince has attracted his fair share of headlines during a distinguished AFL career.

From winning the Adelaide Crows best and fairest in 2009, to the Michael Tuck Medal in a 2012 NAB Cup final against West Coast, to making the *Cleo* Bachelor of the Year final, to being praised for his astute tagging role on former teammate Patrick Dangerfield.

And this week the former country boy from the Yorke Peninsula in South Australia used his shearing skills in a wool promotion at the MCG in the lead-up to Sunday's Melbourne-Fremantle match which has a distinctly woollen flair.

It is all part of the Fibre of Football campaign which celebrates the great heritage between wool and football: two uniquely Australian products.

Vince joins AFL stars Nat Fyfe and Tom Hawkins in highlighting the role wool has played in their background.

Vince is from a woolgrowing property on the Yorke Peninsula in South Australia and his father was a shearer and a shearing instructor before buying his own farm.

A regular visitor to his home town of Sansbury, Vince still supports his original football club, the Curramulka Minlaton Sansbury Crows, even volunteering as a runner when he was still with the Adelaide Crows.

Traded to Melbourne at the end of 2013, Vince, 29, made an immediate impression at his new club, averaging 24 disposals in a midfield role last season.

And he was delighted when his former Crows teammate Simon Goodwin joined him at the Demons this year as assistant

COMMITTED: Bernie Vince still enjoys his country links, but has gone from playing football just for fun to playing a starring role in Melbourne's resurgence.



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coach because he credits Goodwin with kick-starting his AFL career.

"I owe everything to him," Vince said in an interview with the *Adelaide Advertiser's* Michelangelo Rucci.

"When I was young and living in the country, I didn't know what I was going to do. I just had a laid-back lifestyle and just played footy for fun; I didn't even make any development or representative sides in the country, partly because of my size.

"Even when I got drafted to the Crows, I was just worried about enjoying my footy."

But that all changed after Goodwin called him aside for a serious chat two years into what had been a rocky start to his career.

"Goody' sat me down and I remember 'Roo' (former captain Mark Ricciuto) being in the room, too, and they told me they saw something in me, that I could be a really good player at AFL level.

"I didn't really believe them, but I went away and trained really hard in the off-season with 'Goody' and turned things around. Ever since then he's been a mentor for me."

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