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Reviewed by Anastasia Gonis

Noah loves footy. He has a natural talent and great potential, and is strongly supported by his Indigenous family to follow his dream of playing for the AFL. He belongs to the strong and progressive Mavericks footy team for the under-16s, lead by a dedicated coach.

Ben plays in the under-16s for the opposing team, the Kookaburras. He's competent, talented and completely focused on his goal. He too, shares the same longing as Noah. But the rest of Kooka team isn't as disciplined as Ben or the Mavericks. They use sledging to throw other players off their game, and utilise their prejudices - inflamed by their coach, to create situations on the field which go unpunished. Noah is frequently at the receiving end of their verbal and physical bullying although he is quick to defend himself against all odds.

Ben's slowly growing friendship with Noah is full of roadblocks. His dad is always criticising Aboriginal people, regardless of their obvious sporting talent, strong family unity, and pride in place and belonging.

When the Bushrangers scout comes to watch the game, Noah is noticed. He brings Ben to his attention as well. Will Ben find the courage to make the decision of his life and change clubs? Can he live with the repercussions of such a decision?

This is a powerful story written in sharp prose about teenage boys empowered by their dreams, to bring people together through sport regardless of colour and race. Themes of bullying, racism, friendship, team spirit, and the power of acceptance to bring about change, flow through the sub-stories of this well-crafted young adult novel.