

Allan Langer

'Alfie' Langer would never let something as trivial as advancing age stop him! In 2001, aged 35 and supposedly semi-retired, Origin coach Wayne Bennett made a surprise selection of Langer for the Maroons in the third and deciding match. The comeback was to occur under a shroud of secrecy to avoid public speculation as to whether Langer would be able to withstand the physical rigours of State of Origin football. But when the selection finally came out Sydney journalists scoffed at the state of Queensland's football given that they had needed to "bring back over-the-hill 35-year-olds to win."

Of course, on the night Alfie set up two tries and scored one himself, leading Queensland to a stunning victory only a year after they had suffered their worst ever State of Origin defeat. He was subsequently lured back to the Broncos for one final season in 2002. In doing so he became the NRL's oldest player that year, was named man-of-the-match in the third and deciding game of that year's State of Origin series and became the oldest player to play Origin football.

It was the same with Alfie's size, at 165cm (5'5") better suited to horses than NRL hulks. But he learnt from Tommy Raudonikis early in his career how to exploit his pace and tackle forwards almost twice his size!

The 1990's saw the Little General win just about everything there is in League - premierships with the Broncos, a Clive Churchill Medal, a Rugby League World Cup, State of Origin and even had his own doll on toy store shelves!

One of the more significant achievements for Alfie is that he became a household name even in the southern 'AFL' states, for which League is something mainly to be ignored. Even down there, they respect champions.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ly-89o8DHwg>



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