



# THE ACORN

SEASON 2023 ISSUE 2

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hi Team,

What beautiful Autumnal weather we had for Round 2! Crisp morning and beautiful sunshine throughout the day.

There were some really strong results around the grounds and it sounds like all players gave it their best shot. Remember this is still grading rounds and at the end of Round 4 we will likely see a re-shuffle of some teams based on the results from their first 4 matches. Keep your chins up and keep persevering and as the song goes "We'll never weaken 'til the final siren's gone".

We have a big round of football this weekend. We have 5 matches at Princes Hwy and 5 at Scammell. The League has released Rounds 3 and 4 and it is exciting to see that there are Friday Night scheduled matches at Scammell. So if you are around on Friday 12 May, please get down and support the teams.

Grub this Sunday evening, 7 May, is hosted by the combined U9's teams. Looking forward to seeing you all there again. I'm working on getting another new microphone so I can hear all the Coaches match reports and the lucky recipients of the Grill'd Awesome Effort awards.

A big shout out to the U14 Girls having achieved 100% parental PlayHQ registrations. This Team has at least one parent, for every player, registered in PlayHQ with a valid Working with Children's Check (WWCC). This will make it very easy for Yijing (Team Manager) to allocate Game Day roles. If you haven't done so already, please register with a valid WWCC in PlayHQ, it really does help all our Team Managers to get players on the paddock.

See you Sunday.

Go Dragons!

# GO DRAGONS

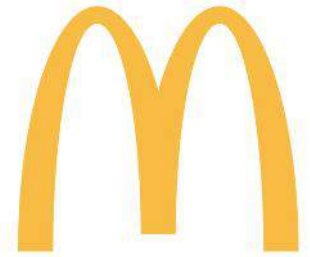
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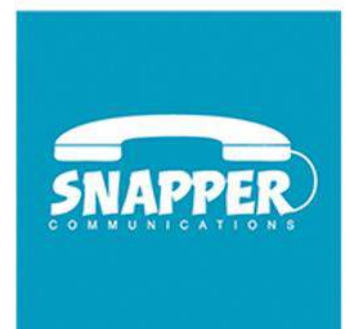
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## COACHES' REPORTS

### U9 MIXED GREEN JAKE BENOITON

Our boys couldn't have been more impressive. A number of outs, but they took it in their stride and put on an excellent display.

They took every instruction I gave them and implemented it to a tee which was awesome to see. The ball movement and link up play was as good as you'll see at this age level.

Rafferty was dangerous up forward all day, James Sanzaro played his role brilliantly all day. Archer has improved with every session and game. But honestly, everyone played their role. Great team effort.

### U9 MIXED YELLOW DANIEL AITKEN

It was an early start for the U9s on Sunday with an 8am home game at Scammell against Brighton Beach. Conditions were perfect for football with the boys having their first opportunity to use the change rooms and play on their home ground.

Unfortunately, the game was one sided with a more mature bigger bodied Brighton too strong for our Dragons. I was really impressed with the persistent efforts of never giving up all game and signs that things we are practicing at training are being implemented on game day. We did have some great passages of play where we were able to link up and move the ball freely, but just couldn't quite convert into goals. A special shout out to Oliver who worked tirelessly all game through the midfield, he never stopped running, be it with the footy or in defence.

There was lots of learning in the game and lots of small, positive signs for our team too as we continue to develop and improve with most of our boys being younger players. We have now had 14 new players make their football debuts which is awesome to see and will hold us in good strength moving forward.

Training is paying off and I can't wait to see you all on Wednesday to continue working on our skills and teamwork to improve together as the season goes on.

Thanks to Hilly and Michael who helped prepare the ground for the modified rules.

### U10 MIXED GREEN ALEX O'BRIEN

On a beautiful morning, we faced Beaumaris at Scammell. We got off to a slow start but competed well after quarter time. The boys tried their best but were outclassed by a taller and stronger unit.

We played with 16 from our normal team and a special mention to the boys who helped us out from the Under 9s. Well done to Thomas E, Greg, David, Ethan and Ben on putting in solid performances.

Max M, Thomas M and Henry tried very hard and produced many great passages of play.

Training was great last week and it is a matter of time before this translates into game time.





## U10 MIXED YELLOW RICK DAVIES

Today we travelled to East Malvern to take on the Knights in perfect Autumnal weather.

The first half was close, Darwell continued his impressive form in defence, Emily was lively in the forward line and Eli was a tackling machine which kept us in the game.



We moved the magnets in the second half with Luke dominating in midfield and Noah propelling us into attack. Unfortunately we ended up losing to a very strong side but it was one of the highest quality games we have played as a group.

A big shout out to Zoe who kicked her first goal for the Dragons. After rucking all day we moved her forward in the last quarter, where she roved the pack, a quick side step and booted the goal which brought a smile to everyone's face (especially Jai).

Captains: Dion and Charlie (pictured)

Goals: Seth, Zoe

East Malvern 7.5.47 Dragons 2.1.13

## U11 MIXED ALLEN COOK

It was a perfect day for our first match on our home ground today where we faced a quality opposition in AJAX. Unfortunately we were a bit slow out of the blocks and got jumped early with our backline under consistent pressure.

Co-Captains for the week were Jonah and Alex both of whom gave their all and led well. The first half was a little one-sided and we may have been blown away but the opposition kept hitting the post which gave our boys a sniff.

In the second half the boys started to build in confidence and worked harder for each other which is what we want to see. We struggled to connect in the forward line but the effort and energy the boys brought had the opposition on the back foot.

The chasing, strong tackling, shepherding and second efforts on display was a sight to see and it wasn't just our more experienced players - everyone was chipping in. Goals were hard to come by today but Phoenix kicked a beautiful towering snap! Another highlight was a brilliant spin out of a pack in defence by Finley which helped lift the boys.

We still need to work on game sense and positioning and find a way to get rolling from the first siren but we have plenty to work with and a great team that doesn't give up. Looking forward to seeing how we go in our rematch against Dingley next week as they had our measure in the practice match a few weeks back.



Go Dragons!



## U12 GIRLS MARCO PERSI

Another week, another brave and gutsy performance by our fierce girls!!

Running around Scammell for the first time this season we played a very fast team of the Mount Waverley Hawks. It was a battle from the start, the Hawks got the early jump but our girls fought hard to create lots of opportunities.

Olivia and Skye worked hard through the midfield and forward getting the ball down to Lavinia, Kiana and Victoria who kept busy up front, nearly sneaking a goal or two.

Our mids Miette, Ruby and Sofia didn't stop running all day, helping down back and pushing forward keeping the ball in our forward line for long periods throughout the match.

Greta and Stella were brilliant running off the half back line and linking up with our mids, while Bonnie and Semira marked everything down back and stopped countless attacks all day.

Even though at times we had one or two less players on the field the girls didn't give up, worked awesome as a team and fought hard to win the third quarter. The girls kept up their reputation of being tackling beasts!! If we don't have the ball you can guarantee the opposition will be chased down and tackled.

The Hawks eventually ran out winners 1-2-8 to 7-4-46. I know our first win isn't far away.

Go Dragons!

## U13 MIXED GREEN DAVID CASH

Another tough day for our players, an afternoon game at Como Park v Prahran. Lovely weather for the game, sun shining but not too hot or cold.

We had Hugo and Mahalis playing their first game for the season, and they played well. I started writing a little something about every player but changed my mind, I wanted to focus on the team not the individuals this week. There were many great individual efforts which combined together into a team effort that showed the spirit of what we want to achieve this year - like handpassing to a team mate in a better position, or taking on an opposition player, kicking to a team mate and putting your body on the line to get to the ball first. As I am writing this I am picturing so many of our players doing these things, it really brings a smile to my face.

The fact that all you boys in Sunday's Game, never gave up, never stopped trying and continued to work hard for each other is testament to you all as people and footballers, you improved every single quarter reducing the opposition's impact, they didn't have it all their own way. I am proud of you all as individuals but more importantly as a team of Dragons.





## U13 MIXED YELLOW TIM MORELAND

Our first home game of the year was met with perfect conditions at Scammell Reserve today as we took on East Brighton Vampires. We just wanted to see some improvement in our consistency as we had been training well and started the season with a win last week displaying some reasonable footy.

With Paul R out today we brought in Johnny who showed some good signs in and under the ball. With our style of play and what we've been training for so far, we've been really impressed with the boy's application and want to implement and improve. Our fast, linking ball movement was good to see and now we challenge ourselves in consolidating this week in week out. Really good team effort as we defeated East Brighton 119 to 13.

Everyone in the team contributed and we were delighted across the board. Liam continues to quicken his hands, Darcy R goes from contest to contest and we watched Cam compete on the ground and in the air all day. Charlie was smooth early and is clean with the ball, Curtis showed us his basketball touch with some nice moves, Harrison continues to develop his positioning and Kaeleb's support in multiple positions is very handy. For someone who hasn't played a lot of footy just watch his improvement!!!

We asked Oscar for some consistency around contests and he delivered all game. Well done mate and we look forward to improvement every week. James is a quiet achiever, he is a classic defender and is so important to this team with his defensive leadership. I thought Archie today took a step forward and backed himself. His defensive pressure in our forward line was great and he laid several tackles and applied so much pressure when deep in our forward line.

Cooper played well for all 4 quarters. He is learning the craft of rover and with this natural ability is adding some nice balanced touches to his game style. Really happy with Will's game, with some delays in pre-season - he's only going to improve each week and did this today forward and back. Aiden reads the play so well and uses his nice kick regularly across half back setting up several forward advances during the game.

You know what you're getting with Tyler and his controlled effort around the contest again allowed us to surge forward with regularity, he was very good today. Troy continues to lead hard as a forward and found himself in and around many contests. I like Tommy's balance out of the square and he hits targets regularly which allows us to lock in our forward line. Tom can play in forward as well so we have a handy target when he's resting forward. Well done mate!

Andrew was outstanding. What I'm really liking about his play this year is he's adding some defensive awareness to his game and wants to learn. We are seeing this and he is to be commended for his application and desire to get better.

Harland and Darcy M were amazing today. They're both so important to our team and drive expectation all the time. Not only with their game play but their leadership and desire to improve. Harland ran hard and provided multiple plays across the ground whilst Darcy marked everything, ending up with 10 goals from a wing and CHF. They have played a lot of footy together and just know where each other are going which is great to watch!

Our challenge now is we've set a really good standard early in the year. This is good as we know what we need to do - however to bring it week in week out will be the test. We can only take it a week at a time so that's what we'll do next week and moving forward. I like what we're building, but let us keep improving each week with commitment to training and game time.

Always - many thanks to all the helpers - Reagan, Jason, Paul, umpire escorts, boundary umpires, time keepers, lollies/fruit etc... It's a great team we have...



Go Dragons



## U14 GIRLS JUSTINE LEOPOLD

Round 2 we played St Bedes/Mentone at Princes Highway on a frost covered ground at 8am. It was a good test for our girls as this team beat us convincingly in the practice match. Today was a different story. Again we emphasised pre-match about this month's motto to "play as a team" and they took it on board.

The ball was a bar of soap in the first half and we found ourselves down 3 goals at half time. However, the girls dug deep and managed to not let St Bedes/Mentone run away with it. The margin was the same at the end of the match as it was at half time, which was testament to our girls' improvement in the second half. We had plenty of scoring opportunities and if not for a couple of special goals from St Bedes, the score could've been much closer. As I said to the Opposition Coach after the match, we'll get 'em next time!

Special mentions: Elaine - plenty of drive and managed to lock down St Bede/Mentone's best player. Milly B - a rock in defence, keep it up! Lucia - fearless and tireless. Serana - played at both ends and; a great first goal (with an awesome assist by Lucy). Cam - tough game, awesome use of your body around the ground.

Goals - Elaine 1, Serana 1 (Congratulations on your first goal in footy, Serana!)

## U14 MIXED MARCUS SPENCER

This week we played against Murrumbeena/St Peters at Centenary Oval.

Our leadership group for 2023 is Captain - Oskar, Vice-Captain - Ari, Vice-Captain - Campbell supported by group Co-Leaders Nathan (Midfield), Henry (Defence) and Takoda (Forwards). Congratulations to these boys...they have already shown their leadership skills in the early part of the season.

After a convincing win in Round 1, we knew that we would have a much stiffer challenge against Murrumbeena/St Peters. They had a big win in the first game too and we have had some great games with them in the past.

The game took place in perfect conditions on a smallish ground that we hadn't played on before. A tight and tough first quarter saw the ball bouncing between half forward lines with both forward lines being held in check by tight defences. Oskar and Henry were doing a good job on their key forwards and our forwards were equally well held by the opposition. Scores were level at quarter time, which reflected the closeness of the contest.

In the second quarter, our midfield led by Campbell, Mitchell and Nathan started to get on top. That effort created more opportunities for our forwards and Ari took advantage. Half time came and we had established a one goal break, but the game was hard and physical.

The third quarter continued to be an arm wrestle. Players from both sides putting their bodies on the line. Ayden, Milan, Lachie, Hamish and both Elliot(t)'s were showing that they would not be intimidated by bigger opponents. Our tackling was particularly strong and this was frustrating the opposition. In a back and forth contest, Murrumbeena managed to score two goals to our one and that meant that three-quarter time saw scores level at 28 apiece.

The last quarter was particularly pleasing. Every player contributed when they had the opportunity. The backline held strong and the midfield continued to provide good supply to our forwards. In the end, Ari's four goals for the game proved the difference. Hunter kicked two important goals as well and that was enough for us to come away with a seven point win. This was a great team effort.....we were challenged by a very good team and we didn't back down. We can and will get better, but so will they. From the perspective of creating strong belief in our team, this game should prove to be a great base on which we can build.





## U16 GIRLS JOHN BERNARDO

With a bye in round 1, today was the start of 2023 for the under 16 girl's team. Today also meant that we were playing our "ANZAC Round". As I arrived at the ground, the excitement and anticipation amongst the girls was obvious.

We welcomed four new players to our team Ruby, Natalie, Brianna and Charlotte. After the rev up in the rooms we took to the field. Waverley Hawks came out strong and kicked 3 early goals. After shuffling the team around and everyone lifting we applied that Dragon spirit and kept them goalless in the second quarter. The 3rd and 4th quarters Waverley got away from us ending up winning 50-0. However I was extremely happy with the way we never gave up and more importantly never showed a lack of interest. Everyone on the field played their part and put their bodies on the line at one stage or another. A huge thanks to Sienna, Zoe and Camryn who played up from the under 14's, you were very much appreciated.

As I mentioned this was our ANZAC game, Sienna Bernardo was in every contest and was a ball magnet. Hazza Blight played her best ever game for the Dragons and stepped up when I moved her onto the ball. Jessica Hopgood was a general and dominated the backline, her ability to read and rebound the ball is second to none.

Today our most courageous player was Chanel Di Rienzo (pictured). Her tackling pressure, toughness and leadership qualities on the field showed why she was a worthy winner of the Anzac Medal.



Heads up and well done girls!

## U16 BOYS ZAC BARRETT / MASON ANSELL

This week the U16 boys had a Bye.

## U17 BOYS JOHN MCLAUGHLIN

Opponent: Beaumaris Away Game at Banksia Reserve

Result: Oakleigh Dragons won by 107 points

The Football Gods were smiling on us, with a beautiful Autumn Day, the sun shining and a still day. We started the game well showing our intent early. This was Beaumaris' second squad that tried hard all day but our boys ending up having an easy win. It is still grading, and things will work itself out soon.

The first quarter, with the Dragons 33 points to zero and this was the exact same scoring in the second quarter, so we were being consistent. Our run from all parts of the ground was pleasing. We had a couple of injuries in the first half as Billy (hand) and Borgy (leg) had early finishes - hopefully both will be ok.

Special mentions from the game:

- The Rockstar - Elliot Black was very lively up forward and kicked 6 for the game. Xavier with lots of run and attacking moves kicked 2 good goals playing at half back, Sammy H got 2 and the rest were shared around - good to see Aden and Jake get involved in the goal scoring.
- Our on-ball brigade was working well - Pete and Stevie keep impressing each week - this was after their game in the u19s on the Saturday, both were in the best players for the older boys. Oscar had plenty of it and is working hard on his forward play. Tommy H was good with his hands.
- A terrific game by Jimmy in the ruck who dominated the ball ups all day and gave first use.



- It was a good team effort where we shared the ball and ran together to create space and to outnumber the opposition.

See all the players at training his week. We have had 2 easy wins, but this week is our test so get ready guys.

Go Dragons

## U18 GIRLS GAVIN KENNY

This week we travelled out to Dingley to take on Dingley/Mordi Brae.

With a late withdrawal, we only had 13 players so we were like the man with the wheelbarrow – we had the job in front of us!

The girls were ferocious all day and gave 100%. We were first in for the ball, chased and tackled when they had it, and used the ball well going inside our forward line.

It was a great team effort that saw us come out winners - 10:9 69 to 1:4 10. Everyone contributed:

1. Gecko - controlled the back line all day and drove us into attack
2. Livvy - took a number of intercept marks and kicked long with her left foot out of the backline
3. Lily F - ran all day, contested, bumped, tackled and drove the ball forward. Never gave up.
4. Tayla - contested hard all day and gave us run off the half back line
5. Choetso - tackled and put her body on the line – ran all day in the middle and down back
6. Daisy - dominated the ruck all day and snuck forward to kick a couple of goals
7. Clem - was involved in a lot of link up play through the middle of the ground
8. Freya - head over the ball as usual, tackling, pressure, clean pick ups and plenty of kicks to advantage. Kicked a goal.
9. Giselle - broke the lines all day, had heaps of the ball, baulked, weaved, bounced and snagged 2 goals. Voted Best on Ground by the opposition coach.
10. Olivia J - used the ball effectively, ran all day in the centre and up forward, put her body on the line and got free kicks
11. Ella - did a great job up forward, applied pressure, tackled and set up some scoring opportunities
12. Ayla - was in everything today - marked, bumped, tackled, pressured, and kicked 2 good goals
13. Lauren - with her socks pulled up, was taking marks and showing the crowd the ball before helping herself to 3 ripper goals.







## SOCIAL MEDIA



Don't forget to follow us on social media for all the latest news

Facebook: Oakleigh Dragons Junior Football Club

Instagram: @oakleigh\_dragonsjfc

## WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECKS

A reminder that all players are expected to have one parent/guardian contributing to game day roles. To fill these roles, parents/guardians must hold a valid Working With Children Check (WWCC) and be registered with Play HQ as a volunteer. Remember if these game day roles are not filled our kids can't take to the field!

If you haven't already done so, apply for a free WWCC (volunteer roles only) at [www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au](http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au)  
Then provide your WWCC details when you register as a volunteer with PlayHQ at [www.playhq.com/](http://www.playhq.com/)



### SMOKE-FREE

By law, smoking is banned within 10 metres (about two car lengths) of any public outdoor sporting venue during an organised under-18s event.

The ban includes training or practice sessions to prepare for an organised under-age sporting event, and breaks or intervals during the course of the event, training or practice session.



## GRUB AT THE CLUB SCHEDULE

Subject to change during the season depending on game times, your Team Manager will keep you posted.

**Don't forget – Grub's Gone Green! BYO plates and cutlery.**

Date	U8 & U9	U10	U11-U13	U14+	Holidays	Grub at the Club
23-Apr	Round 1	Round 1	Round 1	Round 1		U16 Boys
30-Apr	Round 2	Round 2	Round 2	Round 2		
7-May	Round 3	Round 3	Round 3	Round 3		U9 Mixed
14-May	Round 4	Round 4	Round 4	Round 4	Mother's Day	
21-May	Round 5	Round 5	Round 5	Round 5	National Volunteer Week, 15-21 May	Hosted by Special Guest
28-May	Round 6	Round 6	Round 6	Round 6		
4-Jun	Round 7	Round 7	Round 7	Round 7		U10 & U11 Mixed
11-Jun	No Games / Interleague Carnival				King's Birthday	
18-Jun	Round 8	Round 8	Round 8	Round 8		U12 & U14 Girls
25-Jun	Round 9	Round 9	Round 9	Round 9	School Holidays	
2-Jul	No Games				School Holidays	
9-Jul	No Games				School Holidays	
16-Jul	Round 10	Round 10	Round 10	Round 10		U16 & U18 Girls
23-Jul	Round 11	Round 11	Round 11	Round 11		
30-Jul	Round 12	Round 12	Round 12	Round 12		U14 Mixed
6-Aug	Round 13	Round 13	Round 13	Round 13		
13-Aug	Lightning Carnival	Round 14	Round 14	Round 14		U13 Mixed
20-Aug		Lightning Carnival	Round 15	Round 15		U18 Boys
27-Aug			Semi Finals	Semi Finals		
3-Sep			Grand Finals	Prelim Finals	Father's Day	
10-Sep				Grand Finals		
TBC	PRESENTATION DAY (School holidays commence 16/09)					

