

COBRAM JUNIOR SOCCER ASSOCIATION HISTORY

In the early 80's there was no junior soccer competition for children to satisfy their passion of playing soccer.

The Cobram Soccer Club had been in existence for some 30 years and the eleven children who represented the Under 13 side were it. If you wanted to play and were not good enough to make the team then you basically missed out.

It was the vision of VINCE BALLERINI who saw the need for a Saturday morning competition to both allow children to partake in the game and to prepare them for Sunday soccer if they chose to do so, as well as preserving the playing future of the COBRAM SOCCER CLUB.

Vince still attends games to this day, cheering his much loved grandchildren on and watching for talented youth coming through.

And so it was that in 1984 the Cobram Junior Soccer Association was formed with Vince Ballerini as President, Erica Vaughan-Niven as Secretary, Carol Goldsmith as Publicity Officer and Carmel Lampard as the Treasurer. It cost \$5 dollars to register for a ten week competition.

The first year comprised 37 children who were divided into four teams which were graded, and then took to the St. Joseph's Primary School field each Saturday morning in a round robin format through the winter months to play the game, with the top two playing off in the Grand Final.

The first team to win the CJSA Shield (Struck specifically for the CJSA competition) were the ROOS and the first girl to play was none other than the Cobram Soccer Club's Christina Kalz (nee Ballerini).

Christina was so lethal in front of goal she scored 32 goals in one year, making many boys blush, and then went on to represent Australia in Asia.

FOUNDATION YEAR OF COBRAM JUNIOR SOCCER ASSOCIATION



Green Team
Matthew Flanigan, Matthew Pickering, David Mason, Mario Mete, Anthony Ballerini



UNDER 11: (from left) Michael Bovalino, (Best and Fairest), Anthony Ballerini,

Junior Soccer

The first games of the newly formed Junior Soccer will kick off at 10 am this Saturday at St. Joseph's School.

Four teams have been formed and the competition will last 10 weeks. During this time, there will be some games played against teams from Shepparton.

Grading of the players will be done on Saturday morning prior to the games.

The registration fees are set at \$6, this will entitle boys to play in both the Saturday and Sunday competition.

Players who have paid for the Sunday competition are not required to pay again. Boys who are yet to register may do so on Saturday morning.

Officials are:
President, Vince Ballerini.
Secretary, Erica Vaughan-Niven.
Publicity Officer, Carol Goldsmith.
Treasurer, Carmel Lampard.



Yellow Team
Mark Condon, Andrew Pickering, Vince Macheda, Michael Hollands, Joseph D'Agastino, Peter Carpinelli, Michael Mete

Excerpt from the COBRAM SOCCER CLUB 50th Anniversary booklet (Re: 1984)

After the foundation year the popularity of the game slowly but surely began to grow. More and more parents found that soccer was a low impact game and enrolled their children to play the game to garner some fitness and team camaraderie.

The size of the Association also grew and as such a change of venue for Saturday mornings was inevitable so by the late 80's the Cobram Showgrounds were the new home of the CJSA.

At the Cobram Showgrounds there were two pitches and more children could play the game. Age groups were increased to meet the demand and more and more girls were beginning to play the game. There was also the introduction of teams from Tocumwal, and it seemed that children could not wait for Saturday morning to arrive.



This is the original CJSA Shield (above) and the plaque (below)



The transition into the 90's proved good and bad for the CJSA with the competition moving to Apex Reserve, it's current home, making it's first foray into the Victorian Junior Country Championships and almost folding along the way.

Numurkah made it's appearance into the CJSA in the 90's and the competition seemed to hold at around 200 to 250 children per year, in 2004, however, Numurkah broke away and formed their own competition which to this point competes in the Shepparton Junior Soccer Association.

The CJSA also took on the name of Murray Border Junior Soccer Association, which was a reference to the combination team from Moama-Echuca Junior Soccer and Cobram Junior Soccer, and entered the Victorian Junior Country Championships. The representative sides had mixed success at the Championships but did fly the flag for the junior competition.

Towards the end of the 90's the lack of administrative commitment led to the competition nearly folding. There were not enough people who were committed to putting their hands up and with many juniors being led into the Albury-Wodonga Football Association through the formation of a new Club, the CJSA was on the brink of closing.

Vince Ballerini came to the fore as caretaker president and allayed any fears of the competition ending its long association.

As years went by the age groups also increased, with over 400 children competing at one stage in age groups ranging up to Under 14. The trend ebbed and flowed and the competition subsided again to a steady average of 250 children.

The entry of Finley teams came in the early 2000's with three teams competing, and the NSW sides have been a welcome addition to the ever growing and diverse competition.

In 2008 Tocumwal made a re-emergence into the CJSA after a lengthy absence.

AWARDS

The CJSA has not given awards for individual excellence for many years, with the advent of political correctness individuality made way for team ethos which has had many positive outcomes. Children tend to play for their team as opposed to themselves and as such teamwork prospers.

At one stage though there were varying awards which the children received including Best & Fairest, Runner Up Best & Fairest, Goalkicking and Most Improved.



Some individual award winners from the mid 80's

FORMULA

Primarily the format for teams in the CJSA has been eleven per side but with the advent of ROOBALL and Small Sided Games the field number will drop to the National Standard in years to come.

The first years of the CJSA saw teams participate in Semi-Finals and then ultimately Grand Finals and this was the standard for many years. The introduction of Lightning Premierhips or One-Day Tournaments has been relatively new, but has seen the parents and children embrace it whole heartedly.

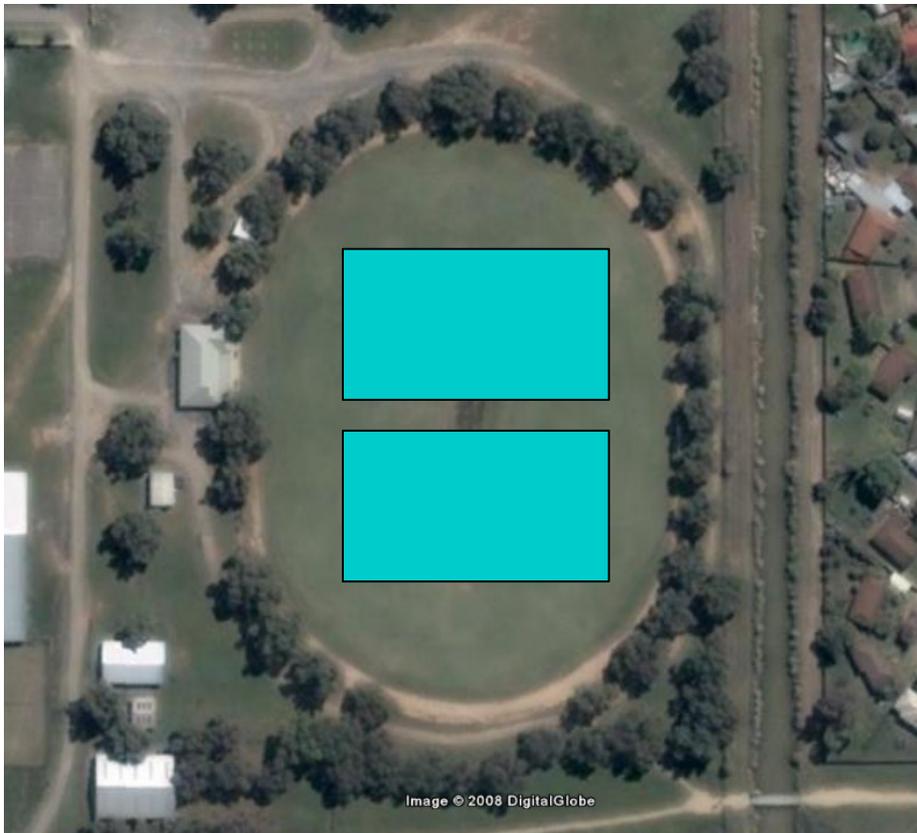


Some of the team photo's from the late 80's taken at the St. Joseph's Primary School grounds

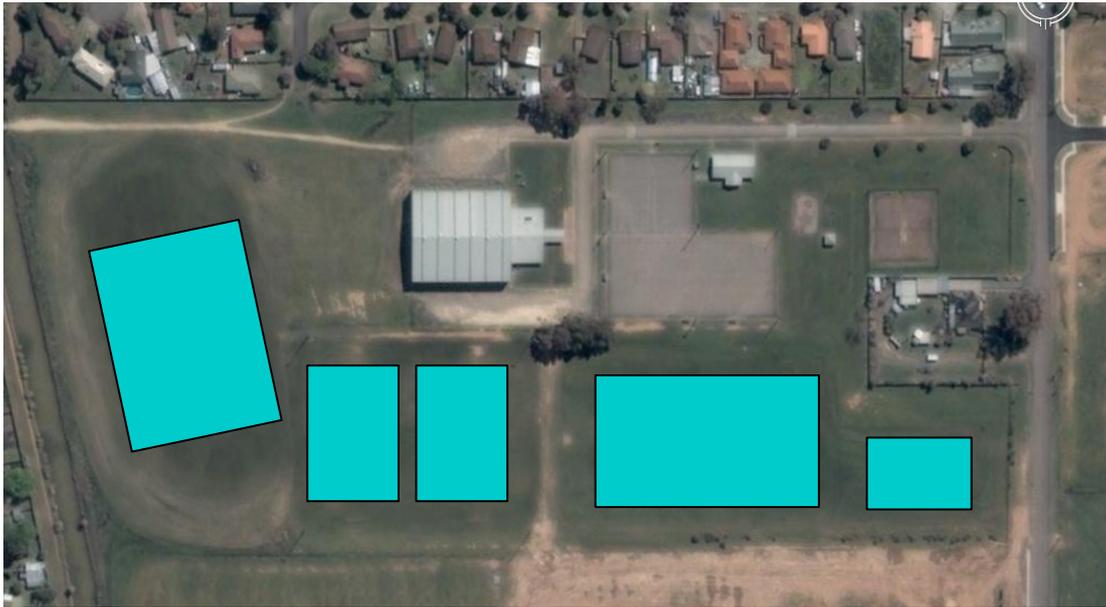
VENUES



*St. Joseph's Primary School Ground (Above) and Cobram Showgrounds (Below)
The run of the pitches is also displayed*



Below is the current home of the Cobram Junior Soccer Association (Apex Reserve)



TEAMS

COBRAM TEAMS

Cobram teams have, as expected, always been prevalent in the CJSA. Usually teams are divided into a colour format mainly consisting of Blue, Green, Red and Yellow. With the inclusions of more age groups and teams varying colours were introduced including Black, Maroon, Orange and White.

FINLEY TEAMS

Finley entered the CJSA in the early 2000's, and were brought to the area by Paul Amell and Mick Taylor initially. John Bergmans took the baton in the mid 2000's and is still a passionate supporter of the game and organiser of the NSW element of the CJSA.

Finley sides have been quite strong from their very first year, providing good competition for many of their Victorian counterparts.

NUMURKAH TEAMS

Numurkah entered the CJSA as an entity in 1997/1998 and won the Grand Final in their very first year. Lino and Judy Gasparoni formed the team after some Numurkah children were mixed into various sides in the CJSA. After fielding sides for a number of years Numurkah left the competition in 2004 and joined the Shepparton Junior Association.

TOCUMWAL TEAMS

Tocumwal first entered sides in around 1987 when then committeeperson Barbara Clark, along with John Munson decided to field a Tocumwal side as a single entity after many children were dispersed through the CJSA. Tocumwal played for a number of years before disbanding. In 2008 Tocumwal made a re-emergence through John Bergmans who had many children from Tocumwal throughout his Finley sides.