

Tamworth Swans AFC

2014 Match Reports



and  photo journalism





Tamworth Swans AFC – 2014

BACK: Paul Kelly, Chris Wilson, Ben Hunt, Stephen Fairless, Aaron McRae, Nathan Bradburn, Thomas Byrnes, Adam Splithof, Janson Doughty, Aaron Moxey, Simon Collins.
FRONT: Josh McRae, Dean Finlay, Michael Moffitt, Shane Kilby, Maddison Smith, Josh McKenzie, Scott Nowland, Gavin Knee, William Priest, Martin Burke, Andrew Donohue.



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Tamworth Swans AFC


SUMMARY OF RESULTS – 2014

R1	H	Inverell Saints	5.10 (40) – 11.16 (82)
R2	A	New England Nomads	3.7 (25) – 35.15 (225)
R3	H	Tamworth Kangaroos	12.7 (79) – 20.14 (134)
R4	A	Narrabri Eagles	9.6 (60) – 16.17 (113)
R5	H	Gunnedah Bulldogs	8.8 (56) – 9.9 (63)
R6	A	Inverell Saints	2.8 (20) – 25.17 (167)
R7	H	New England Nomads	7.7 (49) – 14.12 (96)
R8	A	Tamworth Kangaroos	9.6 (60) – 5.12 (42)
R9	H	Narrabri Eagles	14.17 (101) – 4.11 (35)
R10	A	Gunnedah Bulldogs	13.8 (86) – 10.9 (69)
R11	H	Inverell Saints	7.6 (48) – 20.9 (129)
R12	A	New England Nomads	18.17 (125) – 6.6 (42)
R13	H	Tamworth Kangaroos	9.7 (61) – 15.16 (106)
R14	A	Narrabri Eagles	5.4 (34) – 11.11 (77)
R15*	H	Gunnedah Bulldogs	11.10 (76) – 0.0 (0)

* Gunnedah score cancelled in round 15 due to playing of an ineligible player

Tamworth AFL supported by Essential Energy

PREMIERSHIP LADDER – 2014

	P	W	L	F	A	%	Pts
New England Nomads	15	14	1	1853	813	227.92	56
Inverell Saints	15	12	3	1670	877	190.42	48
Tamworth Kangaroos	15	9	6	1399	1102	126.95	36
Narrabri Eagles	15	6	9	1070	1648	64.93	24
Tamworth Swans	15	3	12	819	1481	55.30	12
Gunnedah Bulldogs	15	1	14	862	1752	49.20	4

2014 MATCH STATISTICS



			MATCHES	GOALS	GOAL AVERAGE	HIGHEST SCORE	TIMES IN BEST
Atkinson	Josef	Joey	1	-	-	-	-
Bradburn	Nathan	Levi	14	8	0.57	2	4
Burke	Martin	Burkey	2	-	-	-	-
Byrnes	Thomas	Melman	14	37	2.64	5	7
Campbell	Douglas	Dougie	7	-	-	-	-
Collins	Simon	Bear	12	5	0.42	2	1
Cumming	David	Keepa	9	1	0.11	1	-
Dalby	Shawn	Sheepy	2	-	-	-	-
Donohue	Andrew	Tassie	3	-	-	-	-
Doughty	Janson	Dockets	14	2	0.14	1	9
Dwyer	Patrick	Muffins	2	-	-	-	-
Fairless	Stephen	Sticky	14	1	0.07	1	8
Finlay	Dean	Princess	12	-	-	-	4
Fox	Luke	Halle	1	1	1	1	1
Hayes	Jax	Crackers	1	-	-	-	-
Hobson	Paul	Buzz	2	-	-	-	-
Hudson	Ben	Sizzler	3	1	0.33	1	-
Hunt	Ben	Binge	6	1	0.17	1	1
Kelly	Paul	PK	1	-	-	-	-
Kilby	Shane	Killer	8	1	0.12	1	3
Knee	Gavin	Dicky	15	22	1.47	3	8
McKenzie	Josh	Smother	14	2	0.14	1	3
McRae	Josh	Junior	11	-	-	-	6
McRae	Aaron	Azza	4	-	-	-	1
Miller	Dane	Funky	2	-	-	-	-
Moffitt	Michael	Moth	10	3	0.3	1	4
Molony	James	Jimbob	2	2	1	2	-
Moxey	Aaron	Mox	3	-	-	-	-
Nicholls	Kyle	Knickers	4	2	0.5	1	-
Nowland	Scott	Snaggles	13	6	0.46	1	4
Poulier	Jack	Stewie	3	1	0.33	1	-
Priest	William	Sledge	11	3	0.27	2	4
Roberts	Ian	Sammy	8	-	-	-	-
Rowling	Lachlan	Lock	5	1	0.2	1	5
Smith	Codie	Plankton	1	-	-	-	-
Smith	Maddison	Yabbie	13	1	0.08	1	-
Splithof	Adam	Hof	7	3	0.43	1	4
Stuart	Alex	Alex	3	-	-	-	1
Townsend	Nick	Waiday	3	-	-	-	1
Traynor	Seamus	Shagger	4	1	0.25	1	1
Verrall	Mark	Toot	2	-	-	-	-
Walters	Bradley	Pup	8	4	0.5	1	1
Walters	Zac	Kitty	1	-	-	-	-
Wealand	Sam	Wheels	1	1	1	1	-
Wendt	Damien	Dillon	10	-	-	-	5
Wilson	Chris	Wilso	15	6	0.4	3	4

Round One – 3rd May 2014
Tamworth Swans v Inverell Saints
Number One Oval, Tamworth

The start of the Tamworth AFL season was greeted with a bitterly cold, windy, wet and pretty miserable day, with the Tamworth Swans hosting the Inverell Saints in the first match of a twilight double header at Number One Oval. With a solid preseason, the Swans were confident of matching motors with the Saints, who were expected to be keen to set a tone towards redemption after a heavy defeat in their seventh consecutive Grand Final appearance.

With a strong wind at their backs in wet and slippery conditions, the Saints made the best of the conditions early, driving into their forward fifty from the opening bounce and basically setting up camp at the Swans' defensive end. The Swans were lead to the ball by their opponents for most of the first quarter, and struggled to put the brakes on the Saints' juggernaut. Finding space aplenty in a surprisingly loose Swans defence, wayward kicking cost the Saints a chance to truly take advantage of their flying start. They put on two major scores before the Swans were able to wrestle some momentum back, but could only scrap a single behind to trail by 19 points at the first change.

The second quarter saw the wind fall away and the players were teased with some sunshine, and with it the Swans were able to settle in a slightly better rhythm. Dragging themselves back into the contest, the Swans were able to pester the Saints defence, but found meaningful penetrations of the forward fifty difficult. With an open forward line, the Saints made the Swans pay on the break, kicking two goals to start to skip away. A Swans reply gave the red and white some belief, but this was shortly after answered by the third Saints goal for the quarter, seeing them go into half time leading by 30 points.

With the third quarter came the third season of the match, as sleeting rain swept across Number One Oval. The Swans stepped up the intensity and took the contest to the Saints, and a lift in defensive awareness saw them force the visitors to work harder for attacking opportunities. The Saints truly started to take their chances though, which saw them post another five goals to the Swans' one. After three gruelling quarters, the Saints went into the final break 55 points to the good.

Urged to run out the match and work on taking something into the rest of the season, the Swans really took the contest to the Saints in the final quarter. With increased composure around the ball and no shortage of genuine effort, the Swans were able to put together some stylish pieces of play to post three major scores, including two to the impressive Tommy Byrnes on debut. The proud Saints were never going to give the contest away, but were restricted to just a single goal. Despite wasting some clear chances in front of the sticks late, the Swans had the better of the last stanza to reduce the final deficit to 42 points.

Despite the disappointment of the scoreline, there were plenty of positives for the Swans on a day made very tough by the conditions. Michael Moffitt's debut was solid, with strong attack on the ball across the wing, and another Swans debutant in Chris Wilson impressed with his presence in the middle of the field. Josh McKenzie was named the Swans' best, with Seamus Traynor winning the Player's Player with a determined and brave effort. The Green Ant went to Maddison Smith as an undiscerning inviter in the preseason.

FINAL RESULTS

SWANS:	0.1 (1)	1.4 (10)	2.6 (18)	5.10 (40)
SAINTS:	2.8 (20)	5.10 (40)	10.13 (73)	11.16 (82)

GOALS:

SWANS: T. Byrnes, S. Collins (2); S. Traynor (1).

SAINTS: M. Gould, C. Whitton (3); R. Brien (2); N. Baird, H. Chappel, L. McDonald (1).

BEST:

SWANS: J. McKenzie, W. Priest, M. Moffitt, C. Wilson, T. Byrnes, J. Doughty.

SAINTS: L. Selig, T. Williams, H. Chappel, A. Cox, M. Gould, C. Schneider.

Gillies Medal votes: C. Wilson (1).



Round Two – 10th May 2014
New England Nomads v Tamworth Swans
Bellevue Oval, Armidale

After the wintry conditions of the previous week, the Tamworth Swans made the trip to Armidale unusually looking forward to more pleasant climes. Bellevue Oval did not disappoint, turning on a mild and still day. With the Nomads seemingly in full flight early in 2014, the reigning Premiers were expected to set a hard task for the Swans.

After a lacklustre warm up, the Swans were exposed from the outset, as the Nomads took charge of the midfield contest early and poured quality ball into their forward fifty. With men in green seemingly popping up out of the ground in front of the sticks, the Swans had little answer and the Nomads took full advantage, piling on the goals at the start of the quarter. The shell shocked Swans were called on to go with their man to stem the flow, but with the Nomads had their tail up, kicking the first eleven goals of the match. To compound things, Chris Wilson was shown a yellow card to offer the Nomads a one man advantage that they didn't really need. Shane Kilby, one rare Swan who looked up for the contest, was rewarded for his attack at the ball with a free kick, and his goal after a fifty metre penalty was the only trouble the visitors gave the score keeper. At the close of the first quarter, the Swans found themselves trailing by 64 points.

Called on to respond after the break, looking to maintain some structure and work on salvaging positives from the game, the Swans defence toughened in the second quarter. Working harder to go with their men, and battling away to contest every possession, the Swans started to frustrate their opponents attack for the first time in the match. With the ball in hand the Swans looked dangerous, with one phase of play seeing the ball move smoothly from half back to a dangerous inside fifty, but clean ball was all too rare. The pressure inevitably told, and the Nomads kicked five goals to extend their advantage, though most came late in the quarter. One highlight for the Swans was Josh McKenzie kicking a long range goal from a centre clearance, but it was bows and arrows against the lightning as the Nomads went into half time with a 90 point lead.

With the match gone, it was a matter of holding the dyke in the second half for the Swans. The dominance of the slick Nomads continued but, and enjoying first use of the ball in the middle their running game kept them a step ahead across the paddock. Some isolated Swans were brave at individual contests, too often in exception as the Nomads clean ball movement picked the Swans apart. Hard work in the defensive six restricted the Nomads to eight goals, but the Swans four minors in reply saw the deficit pushed out to 138 points at the last change.

With little more than a battered pride to fight for in the last twenty-five minutes, the Swans were unable to match the run of the Nomads, who poured into their forward line with the abandon of a team well in control. The Swans struggled for clean attacking penetration when they did find the ball, and the Nomads rebounded in style, adding another eleven goals. Mustering some reply, the strong marking of Tommy Byrnes was another small victory for the Swans, and he was rewarded with the visitor's third goal for the day. This goal brought the lead back under 200 fleetingly, before some late behinds saw the Nomads run out victors by an even two hundred points.

The Swans are no strangers to long days on away trips in recent years, but this was a whole new dimension. The ruthless efficiency of the Nomads was awful on the receiving end, and time will tell if the result is more indicative of their class or a poor performance from their opponents on the day. Stephen Fairless refused to concede in the Swans backline, and but for him there is no telling what the score might have been. He was named the best for the Swans, with Shane Kilby's brave effort earning him the gong from the players. Brad Walters didn't see much Sherrin in a lean day for a forward, but he was very good on the bus ride home. Debutant Ben Hunt showed plenty of fight, and Alex Stuart and David Cumming also went well in a rough Senior debut. The Green Ant was not awarded.

FINAL RESULTS

NOMADS:	11.4 (70)	16.10 (106)	24.14 (156)	35.15 (225)
SWANS:	1.0 (6)	2.2 (14)	2.6 (18)	3.7 (25)

GOALS:

NOMADS: D. Richards (8), I. Graham (7), M. Folpp, A. Walsh (4), M. Foley, J. Freund, T. Granleese (2), C. Ballagh, V. Chakalisa, T. Dickson, T. Hunt, S. MacDonald, W. Whitby (1).

SWANS: T. Byrnes, S. Kilby, J. McKenzie (1).

BEST:

NOMADS: W. Whitby, M. Foley, D. Richards, I. Graham, J. Freund, J. Frost.

SWANS: S. Fairless, G. Knee, S. Nowland, M. Moffitt, T. Byrnes, A. Stuart.

Gillies Medal votes: Nil.



Round Three – 17th May 2014
Tamworth Swans v Tamworth Kangaroos
Number One Oval, Tamworth

A warm day and a fast track at Number One Oval welcomed the local derby and the first game in the 2014 Billy Holder Cup series. With the Kangaroos coming off two strong wins, the Swans knew that they had to rebound from a heavy loss the week before and bring their best to match it with the old foe.

The two opening matches of the season saw the Swans start slowly, but from the first bounce of this game they showed much firmer intent. The Kangaroos, running with a slight breeze, had the better of the early ball, but took some time to find the first goal of the match. A second followed before a typically deadly response from Gavin Knee fired the Swans into gear. The contest livened up, with the Kangaroos also lifting and finding a reply. Nathan Bradburn was rewarded for toughness on the ball to close the gap, but with a late goal from a free kick the Kangaroos lead at the first change by 13 points.

The second period saw the Swans fight back, with the midfield starting to take control and the forward line working hard to nullify the Roos rebound in defence. Gavin Knee's second goal put the Roos on the back foot, and when goals followed to Adam Splithof and two to Simon Collins the Swans hit the lead and an upset looking in the offing. As the quarter wore on, though, the Kangaroos found their run, posting a number of their six goals late in the quarter, and going into half time with a 22 point advantage.

Talk through the long break was positive, with the Swans buoyed in having stretched their opponents and confident of pushing the contest in the second half. The quarter started evenly, with a keen contest in the midfield seeing neither team gaining any cheap possession. Nathan Bradburn kicked a second goal, and further goals followed to Kyle Nicholls, Tommy Byrnes and Bradley Walters. The Swans hard working backline kept the Kangaroos to just two goals for the quarter, with the Swans closing the gap to be just 16 behind at the last change.

Heading into the fourth quarter the Swans were keen to show intent around the football and put the Roos under pressure early on. It was the Roos, though, who got the best of the centre clearance, delivering into an open forward line for a goal to Dean Hoy. This sparked an avalanche, with Hoy kicking seven for the quarter. The effort to that point may have told, but with their tails up the Roos were rampant in the middle and delivered the ball to effect time after time. The Swans battled away, and Tommy Byrnes kicked two goals to continue to impress as a genuine forward target, but the Roos simply ran away to win the day by 55 points.

Regardless of the late blow out, the Swans took some solace from an improved performance and having genuinely contested the match for three quarters. Seamus Traynor was superb in the backs and was named the Swans best and the Player's Player. Scott Nowland played one of his best games across the wing and was second in both counts. The Green Ant went to Janson Doughty for his new tradition of posting pre game selfies in the dressing sheds.

FINAL RESULTS

SWANS:	2.3 (15)	6.6 (42)	10.6 (66)	12.7 (79)
ROOS:	4.4 (28)	10.4 (64)	12.10 (82)	20.14 (134)

GOALS:

SWANS: T. Byrnes (3); N. Bradburn, S. Collins, G. Knee (2); K. Nicholls, A. Splithof, B. Walters (1).

ROOS: D. Hoy (11); A. Hudson, M. Hughes (2); N. Frawley, R. Graham, D. Leon, D. Overeem, Z. Taylor (1).).

BEST:

SWANS: S. Traynor, S. Nowland, J. McKenzie, C. Wilson, J. Doughty, S. Fairless.

ROOS: B. Rees, D. Hoy, L. Robinson, D. Johnson, R. Graham, D. Leon.

Gillies Medal votes: J. Doughty (1).



Round Four – 24th May 2014
Narrabri Eagles v Tamworth Swans
Leitch Oval, Narrabri

With the return of the Eagles in 2014, the Swans made their way to the western plains with a chance to reunite with an old friend. Baan Ba would have to wait, however, as first the Swans had to face a serious finals challenger in a confident Narrabri team. After a strong performance the week previous, and despite some key late withdrawals, the Swans were rightly confident of laying down their post season credentials. The match was also significant as a milestone for Nathan Bradburn, playing his 50th match after debuting at just fourteen years of age.

The Eagles started clearly the strongest, keen at the contest, pouring numbers towards the ball and breaking into attack with verve. Their early enthusiasm saw them hoard possession, and the Swans had little answer early on to give up the first three goals of the match. Once the Swans settled into the match they started to look dangerous, and with Chris Wilson and Damien Wendt taking charge of the midfield they kicked the next three goals to look strong in closing the margin to two points at the first change.

The Eagles were again keen in the second quarter, but the composure of the Swans about the ball saw them make better use of their possession. The Swans looked to have control of the match midway through the quarter, kicking themselves to a lead, but the relentless pressure from the Eagles saw some panicked disposals that gifted scoring chances to the hosts. The match looked very much in the balance at half time, but the Eagles had the better to be 14 points ahead.

The third quarter saw the Eagles lift their intensity at the contested ball, with the same pressure of numbers that had told throughout the game. The back six of the Swans tried to lift their team into attack, but chasing the ball saw the Eagles pounce with loose men on turnovers. The Swans were unable to settle on the ball, struggling for clean excursions inside the forward fifty, and the Eagles took the sword to them, kicking five goals to two for the period, and pushing the lead out to an ominous 40 points.

The Swans refused to concede into the final period, taking the challenge up to the Eagles through the centre of the ground. For the first real time in the match the forward line, enjoying some good ball, spurned some chances, and with the visitors forced to take risks to salvage the match the Eagles made them pay on the counter. The Swans defence battled away to restrict them to three goals, but with just one of their own, the Swans went down in the end by 53 points.

The effort and result was a disappointing one, with the match one that was winnable for most of the afternoon. Dean Finlay turned back the clock, with a characteristic brave and well above his weight effort off a half back flank. He was named the Swans best, and was narrowly beaten for the Player's Player vote by a typically composed and hardworking game from Club legend Damien Wendt. Tommy Byrnes continued to impress in the Swans attack. The Green Ant went to Michael Moffitt for a training night mishap, with the Fine Master kept very busy on the bus trip home.

FINAL RESULTS

EAGLES:	3.4 (22)	7.10 (52)	13.13 (91)	16.17 (113)
SWANS:	3.2 (20)	6.2 (38)	8.3 (51)	9.6 (60)

GOALS:

EAGLES: T. Dunn M. Miskle (4); M. Barrow, B. Clarke, T. Fagan (2); R. Gibney, D. Segundo (1).

SWANS: N. Bradburn, T. Byrnes (2); S. Fairless, G. Knee, K. Nicholls, S. Nowland, S. Wealand (1).

BEST:

EAGLES: B. Clarke, M. Miskle, S. Murphy, R. Gibney, G. Hiemoana.

SWANS: D. Finlay, D. Wendt, S. Kilby, S. Fairless, S. Nowland, N. Bradburn.

Gillies Medal votes: D. Wendt (3).



Round Five – 31st May 2014
Tamworth Swans v Gunnedah Bulldogs
Number One Oval, Tamworth

A pleasant morning descended into a drizzly afternoon as the Tamworth Swans hosted the Gunnedah Bulldogs. With both teams winless for 2014, the game was a key matchup for each side to advance their prospects for finals football. The conditions and the stakes meant that a tough day of footy would be ensured.

The first quarter did not disappoint, with the slippery Sherrin and intensity around it seeing both teams finding quality ball hard to come by. The Swans opened the best, and kicked two goals to find an early lead, looking to be in control. The Bulldogs were hard at the ball, and lifted as the term went on to place pressure on the Swans defence. Looking solid, the Swans back six repelled much of this and were unlucky to concede a late goal that saw them lead by one straight kick at the first break.

Neither team was able to gain a clear ascendancy in the second quarter, and the stakes saw a rise in the physical aspect of the game. This saw some brutal exchanges on the ball that frayed some tempers. The Swans looked the better with the ball in hand, and with some impressive passages of play they posted three goals. This was counteracted by the clear hunger of the Bulldogs, who pushed numbers to the contest and kicked three of their own. At half time the match was in the balance, the Swans holding an unconvincing seven point lead.

The Swans were called on to lift again in the third quarter to assert themselves on the match, but it was the Bulldogs who lifted their intensity and poured numbers onto the ball. Running harder through the middle of the ground, the Bulldogs had the Swans defence under siege. Loose Swans backs saw points hard to come by, but loose Bulldogs midfielders saw them unable to clear the back half, and this pressure told as the visitors kicked three goals to the Swans two to take the lead. The game was set up for a frantic final quarter, the Bulldogs just three points ahead at the last change.

The Swans again looked good through stages with the ball in hand in the final period, but struggled for clean ball forward of halfway. The hunger of the Bulldogs came to the forefront, with the conditions seeing plenty of contested ball and no peace found when it was in dispute. Both teams exchanged goals before the Bulldogs kicked their second for the quarter to take a stranglehold on the four points. A desperate few minutes closed the match out, but the Swans struggled to link up as the Bulldogs fought hard, and in the end the visitors ran out winners by seven points.

The game was an exciting one, but a missed opportunity for the Swans as a clearly winnable match and the dressing room as a scene of distinct disappointment. The Swans now have a week off to regather themselves and build a finals challenge with ten rounds left to play. Michael Moffitt was brilliant for the Swans on the wing and was named their best, alongside the Player's Player Stephen Fairless who turned out another stellar effort in defence. Nathan Bradburn continued his good form in an impressive performance in the backline.

FINAL RESULTS

SWANS:	2.3 (15)	5.6 (36)	7.6 (48)	8.8 (56)
DOGS:	1.3 (9)	4.5 (29)	7.9 (51)	9.9 (63)

GOALS:

SWANS: G. Knee (3); T. Byrnes, C. Wilson (2); S. Nowland (1).

DOGS: M. Lather (3); A. George (2); L. Curgenvan, T. Sands, A. Waugh, T. Witts (1).

BEST:

SWANS: M. Moffitt, S. Fairless, J. Doughty, D. Wendt, D. Finlay, N. Bradburn.

DOGS: A. George, T. Sands, J. Mack, L. Curgenvan, A. Hillard, A. Mack.

Gillies Medal votes: D. Finlay (1).



Round Six – 14th June 2014
Inverell Saints v Tamworth Swans
Varley Oval, Inverell

The Tamworth Swans made the long trip to Inverell to face off against the Saints somewhat understrength with injuries and other commitments, but with a good list and a view to build some confidence and improve on a disappointing start to the 2014 season. The constant in the trip up was fog and rain, and a soggy Varley Oval welcomed them on arrival in the Sapphire City.

The weather stretched the bus trip, which saw a disorganised Swans meet the Saints at the opening bounce. The hosts took full advantage, dominating the early clearances and finding forward targets at will as they piled on goal after goal. As the quarter ground on the Swans defence found some steel to stem the flow, but the Swans were unable to build any quality possession, making little impact and causing no trouble to the scorers. At the first change, the Saints had kicked seven goals to lead by 47 points.

The second quarter saw no reprieve, as the ruthless Saints maintained control in the middle of the ground. With first use of the ball, the Saints unleashed a further barrage on the Swans defenders, who battled away but were overwhelmed by sheer weight of possession. One rare forward excursion saw the hardworking Michael Moffitt rewarded with a goal, but the Saints had piled on ten of their own at halftime to stretch their lead to 105.

At the long break a passionate call to the Swans to lift their effort saw them emerge with a renewed resolution. The Saints midfield continued to look dangerous, and the confidence flowing through their forwards saw them make every use of their attacking chances. Fresh vigour amongst the Swans brought with it some victories around the contested ball, and as they built some useful possession of the Sherrin actually controlled some phases of the quarter. One period of forward pressure yielded four behinds before the Saints could clear, but with six goals to none the deficit had once again been extended to 140 at three-quarter time.

The improved effort seemed to bolster the Swans' confidence stocks, as they took the match up to the Saints in the fourth quarter. The contest around the ball remained tough, with the Saints giving little away, but the Swans were again able to link up to build some attacking pressure. A curious incident saw Josh McKenzie awarded a free kick for being pushed in the back by Kyle Nicholls, with the set shot converted to give the Swans their second goal for the game. The Swans defence was able to restrict the Saints to just two goals, and keep the final deficit to 147 points as the Saints ran out convincing winners.

The Swans left the field with some pride in their second half effort, but this added to the disappointment in the final score and the first half steam rolling. Janson Doughty turned out a strong performance, especially in the latter periods, and was named their best and Player's Player. He was well supported by brave efforts from William Priest and Stephen Fairless. Nick Townsend impressed on his debut for the Club. The Green Ant went to Kyle Nicholls, who managed to hit the post from a set shot in the goal square, while David Cumming starred in Uralla.

FINAL RESULTS

SAINTS:	7.5 (47)	17.9 (111)	23.12 (150)	25.17 (167)
SWANS:	0.0 (0)	1.0 (6)	1.4 (10)	2.8 (20)

GOALS:

SAINTS: C. Whitton (9); R. Brien (6); M. Gould, L. McDonald (2); D. Baldwin, M. Black, P. Dunlop, J. Pay, L. Selig, K. Te Velde (1).

SWANS: J. McKenzie, M. Moffitt (1).

BEST:

SAINTS: L. McDonald, C. Whitton, L. Selig, M. Gould, J. Pay, R. Brien.

SWANS: J. Doughty, W. Priest, S. Fairless, J. McRae, T. Byrnes, N. Townsend.

Gillies Medal votes: Nil.



Round Seven – 21st June 2014
Tamworth Swans v New England Nomads
Number One Oval, Tamworth

After a Friday evening of fairly constant rain, it was a fine winter day that greeted the Tamworth Swans as they faced the unbeaten League leaders, the New England Nomads, at Number One Oval. Whilst the 10mm of rain was not enough to force Council to close the ground, the centre bounce was shifted from the soggy middle to minimise damage to the ground.

Despite some selection headaches brought on by key position concerns, the Swans were boosted by the return of Club legend Lachlan Rowling. This positivity showed in the opening of the match, as the Swans took it up to their more fancied visitors. With the slightly slippery conditions seeing clean possessions rare, the Swans were tough at the contest and opened the scoring with the first goal of the match. Sensing they were in the match, the Swans keenness then poured over into some poor discipline, gifting the Nomads field position and the lead with a number of goals. Keeping themselves in the fight, the Swans lifted to get one of their own back late, and were in with a sniff at the end of the first quarter though trailing by 27 points.

The second quarter was more of the same, with the Swans refusing to give the Nomads any peace and contesting for the red nut right across the ground. The visitors looked a little ball shy as a result, and with the Swans stifling their preferred flowing game started to appear frustrated as the match wore on. The Swans effort saw them with several forays inside the forward fifty until a lack of discipline in the niggles that came from the tight contest released the pressure they had worked hard to build. In a solid second period they held the Nomads to three goals whilst kicking two of their own, and the match was still in the balance at half time with just 31 points the difference.

Enthused by sticking so close to the Premiership favourites, the Swans lifted their efforts in the third quarter, looking to genuinely test the Nomads resolve. A dour period followed, with conditions conspiring to see both teams struggle to link up across the ground with any real effect, and the pressure relentless when the ball was on the deck. Both teams traded two goals, which was a result for the visitors, consolidating themselves a 33 point lead entering the final term.

Having thrown themselves into the contest, the Swans entered the final term keen to push the Nomads right to the final bell. The start was a carbon copy of much of the game, with the fight for the ball an earnest one and both teams swapping major scores. The Swans lifted and pushed the ball forward but were unable to make any meaningful impact on the scoreboard. Chris Wilson tested the umpire's patience one time too many and was shown a yellow card, from which the effort told and the Nomads kicked a pair of late goals to extend the margin. In the end the reigning Premiers were just a shade too good, running out winners by 47 points.

The hardworking Swans had done well to push the Nomads and despite the result were rightfully pleased to have improved on recent efforts. Gavin Knee looked almost back to 2009 form in his strongest effort of the year to be named the best for the Swans. Nathan Bradburn provided superb run from the backline and was given the gong from the players. The Green Ant went to Chris Wilson, who is yet to play a full four quarters against the New Englanders.

FINAL RESULTS

SWANS:	2.2 (14)	4.5 (29)	6.5 (41)	7.7 (49)
NOMADS:	6.5 (41)	9.6 (60)	11.8 (74)	14.12 (96)

GOALS:

SWANS: G. Knee (2); B. Hudson, B. Hunt, S. Nowland, L. Rowling, B. Walters (1).

NOMADS: W. Whitby (5); M. Folpp (3); T. Hunt, D. Richards (2); O. Temoso, A. Walsh (1).

BEST:

SWANS: G. Knee, L. Rowling, N. Bradburn, D. Finlay, A. McRae, J. McRae.

NOMADS: V. Chakalisa, W. Whitby, T. Hunt, T. Granleese, D. Richards, M. Evans.

Gillies Medal votes: G. Knee (1).



Round Eight – 28th June 2014
Tamworth Kangaroos v Tamworth Swans
Number One Oval, Tamworth

The second instalment of the 2014 Billy Holder Cup series was an especially big day for a young Swan, with Janson Doughty turning out for his fiftieth appearance in red and white. The fine but blowy winter's morning quickly degenerated into a cold afternoon, with a strong wind pushing steady rain towards the Redimix duck ponds as the match opened.

Facing into this stiff breeze and with the driving rain greeting any attacking excursions, the Swans struggled to make any offensive impact early in the first quarter. Fighting hard in the back six but struggling to clear, the pressure told as the Kangaroos kicked consecutive majors to take the early initiative. In the conditions this was not unexpected, and the Swans appeared unfazed as they drove forward through some tough though unorthodox play through the corridor to goal through Thomas Byrnes. Growing in confidence, the quarter evened out as the Swans were able to push the ball inside fifty, but just found wanting for that last clean possession. Despite being down by 17 points at the first change, it was a confident Swans outfit that gathered at the first change.

With the wind and rain at their back in the second stanza, the Swans launched themselves back into the match and started to build their own pressure on the Kangaroo's back six. One contest inside the forward fifty saw Luke Robinson sent from the field for striking Scott Nowland, and the Swans launched raid after raid towards the Kangaroos goal. This proved frustrating, as the Swans wasted a number of golden chances, and with neither team able to post a major for the quarter the deficit was unchanged at 17 points on half time.

With the wind dying off slightly from the start of the third period, the Swans had a real sniff of an upset and looked to take the contest up to the Kangaroos. The Kangaroos seemed to sense the danger and lifted their own intensity, which saw a hard fought period with neither team genuinely on top. The breeze picked up at the Kangaroos backs as the quarter wore on, seeing them have a better share of field position and eventually unpicking the tough defence of the Swans to kick three goals. With the Swans unable to score at all, the contest may have seemed to be put to bed with a difference of 38 points at three-quarter time.

An impassioned speech from coach Andrew Donohue and favourable conditions to close the game saw the Swans step up a cog. After nudging their way around the Kangaroos defence, they kicked their first goal for over an hour in a somewhat scrappy manner, from which they grew in confidence. Seeming to finally make use of their extra number, and gaining the upper hand at the contest for the first time in the match, the Swans kicked three more goals to finish with a wet sail. In the end time was against them, and the Kangaroos won the day and clinched the Billy Holder Cup (again) with an 18 point victory.

Once again pleased to have turned out an improved performance and to have genuinely challenged the old foe, the Swans were left to rue missed opportunities which really were the difference on the day. Josh McRae was a driving force, especially in the last quarter, and was named the Swans' best. Stephen Fairless was a defensive rock and deservedly and clearly won the Player's Player. The Green Ant was not awarded, but a special mention goes to James Molony who returned on permit. Working hard on a wing, James ran with the ball (and a bounce) a good distance backwards, perchance to clear, but just perchance mistakenly in the wrong direction. Longer serving Swans will remember James has priors...

FINAL RESULTS

ROOS:	4.0 (24)	4.3 (27)	7.6 (48)	9.6 (60)
SWANS:	1.1 (7)	1.4 (10)	1.4 (10)	5.12 (42)

GOALS:

ROOS: M. Hodge, A. Hudson (3); A. Bishop, J. Moore, D. Overeem (1).

SWANS: T. Byrnes (4); W. Priest (1).

BEST:

ROOS: B. Quinn, A. Hudson, D. Johnson, B. Rees, D. Leon, C. Rankmore.

SWANS: J. McRae, L. Rowling, S. Fairless, N. Bradburn, D. Wendt, J. Doughty.

Gillies Medal votes: L. Rowling (2), G. Knee (1).



Round Nine – 12th July 2014
Tamworth Swans v Narrabri Eagles
Number One Oval, Tamworth

After a cold week there was some joy in seeing a sun kissed Number One Oval awaiting as the Swans prepared to host the Narrabri Eagles. The Eagles are the Swans most likely rival for an unlikely finals berth, and they travelled to Tamworth on the back of two strong wins and full of confidence. The Swans were missing one of their best in Stephen Fairless, but were bolstered by the return of Seamus Traynor, Adam Splithof and Shane Kilby, along with James Molony and Josef Atkinson who were to cameo on student permits.

A stiff breeze brought an icy edge to the start of the game, and gave the visitors a distinct advantage as they kicked to the Redimix end. The Eagles made good use of the wind to open proceedings, camping in the Swans defensive end and kicking the first two goals of the match. The Swans defence tightened after the second, and the Eagles struggled for meaningful entry inside fifty. This gave the Swans the chance to counter, and some slick midfield movement saw them post two goals of their own. Missing the chance to truly extend the advantage late in the quarter, the Swans remained pleased at the first break to be up by two points.

With the wind not just at their back but starting to fill their sails, the Swans launched into the second quarter with verve and dominated the Eagles across the park. Stout in the back six, slick across the centre and svelte further forward, the Swans looked anything but cellar dwellers as they kicked five goals for the quarter. The Eagles managed just one in reply, and by half time the Swans were on the cusp of claiming their first win, heading into the sheds in the unfamiliar position of 31 points ahead.

Aware that two strong quarters does not make a game, the Swans went into the third quarter determined not to let the Eagles back into the contest. The wind had eased off by this time, and the Swans were again strong across the centre to maintain control of the match. With the back fifty proving a tough nut for Narrabri to crack, yielding just one major again, the Swans started to blaze from distance and were slightly wasteful in kicking three goals themselves. The result was all but locked in at the last change, though, with the Swans 43 points in front.

The last quarter turned into a more dour affair, with the proud Eagles pushing hard early. They were not without chances, but missed a number of opportunities and kicked just five behinds. The Swans struggled to clear the ball for a time which saw the game stagnate slightly. As the match wore on the contest loosened up, and the Swans were full of run, seeing them able to post a series of late goals to extend their advantage to 66 at the final siren.

The win was one that the Swans has been working towards for a number of weeks, and it was welcomed like an old friend as the Red and White tune was belted out from the pavilion afterwards. It was lucky some older lads, who still remember how we eat it, were around to assist with the song. Lachlan Rowling turned out a typical effort of equal parts class and hard work and was named the best for the Swans. Adam Splithof did a tremendous job nullifying the Eagles main goal threat and he was deservedly awarded the Player's Player. They were not isolated heroes though: Tommy Byrnes, Gavin Knee and Chris Wilson were strong up forward, James Molony and Josef Atkinson great through the middle and Josh McRae and Janson Doughty super in defence. Swans coach Andrew Donohue rightly labelled the win a proper 22-man effort. The Green Ant went to Dean Finlay, who failed to read team mate Damien Wendt's ducking head, and tried to take it off instead.

FINAL RESULTS

SWANS:	2.4 (16)	7.9 (51)	10.13 (73)	14.17 (101)
EAGLES:	2.2 (14)	3.2 (20)	4.6 (30)	4.11 (35)

GOALS:

SWANS: T. Byrnes (4); G. Knee, C. Wilson (3); J. Molony (2); J. Poulter, B. Walters (1).

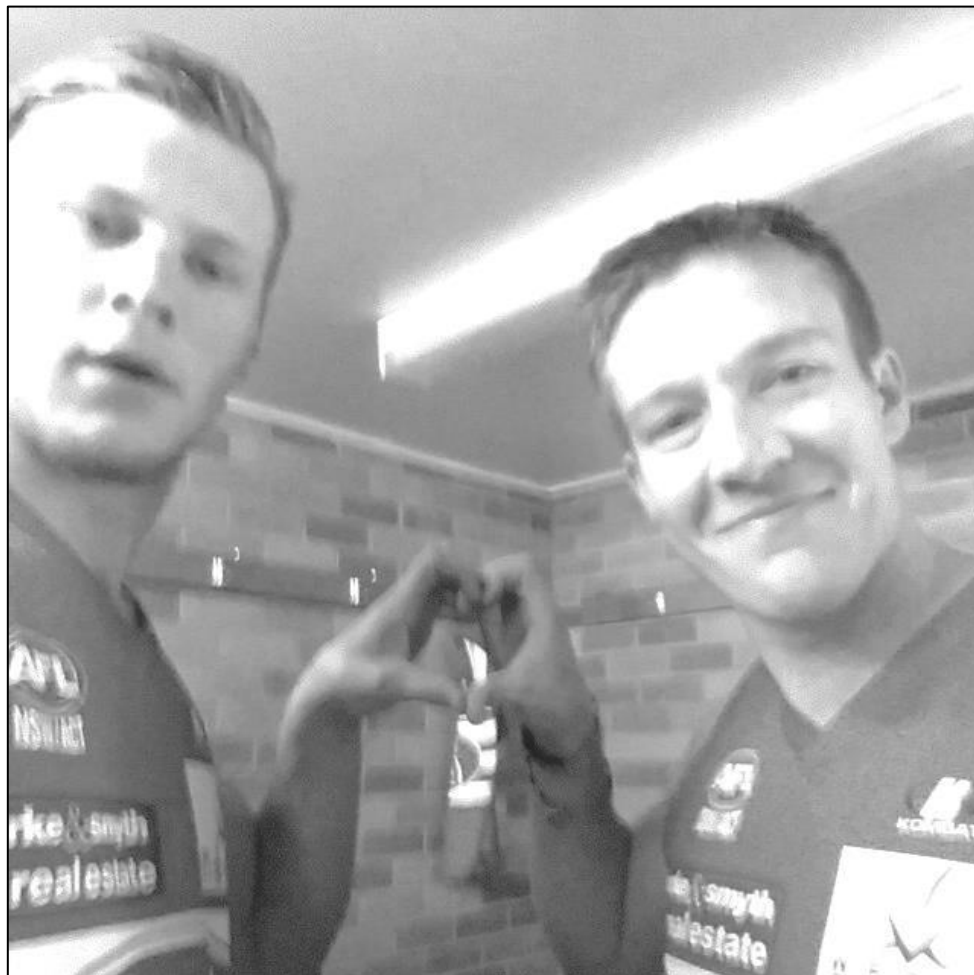
EAGLES: T. Dunn (2); M. Miskle, C. Robinson (1).

BEST:

SWANS: L. Rowling, T. Byrnes, J. Doughty, A. Splithof, C. Wilson, G. Knee.

EAGLES: M. McConnell, J. Skuse, M. Barrow, D. Hughes, S. Murphy, D. Nixon.

Gillies Medal votes: G. Knee (3), L. Rowling (1).



Round Ten – 19th July 2014
Gunnedah Bulldogs v Tamworth Swans
Wolseley Oval, Gunnedah

Enthused by their first win of the season, a newly confident Tamworth Swans made the trip to Gunnedah to face the Bulldogs in an important match for both teams. Having been beaten by the hardworking Bulldogs at home earlier in the season, and with Wolseley Oval never being a happy hunting ground for the Swans, nothing was being taken for granted going into the match and a genuine contest was expected.

With a slightly disrupted warmup due to Presidential error, the Swans were under the gun from the start as the Bulldogs opened the game with vigour. Making the best of the contest in the middle early on, the Bulldogs dominated field position but were restricted to minor scores by a resilient Swans defence. With hard work behind the ball, and the benefit of a reasonable breeze, the tide turn midway through the quarter, and goals followed to Thomas Byrnes and Gavin Knee. Just when the Swans looked to have taken control, though, they squandered some chances and the Bulldogs responded, kicking two of their own to equal the scores into quarter time.

The change of ends saw the Bulldogs again have good use of position on the field, but again some desperate efforts from the Swans defenders frustrated their attacking forays. Eventually the ball found its way forward, and a goal to William Priest followed, before the Bulldogs fought back to goal themselves and keep the contest earnest. The Swans midfield stepped up from then on, and found a reward through Thomas Byrnes to give themselves a small four point buffer at the main change.

Called on through the break for some more composure to make better use of the ball, the Swans were fast out of the blocks. Opening with a flurry of goals, the Swans looked set to break away, but the Bulldogs refused to concede the challenge and took advantage of some sloppy Swans defensive efforts to kick two of their own. This opened the match up, with slick ball movement from both teams replacing the dogged contested efforts of the first half. The Bulldogs managed five for the quarter, but the Swans found seven, including a debut goal to Luke Fox along with two more to Thomas Byrnes and Gavin Knee, an impressive second to William Priest and a single to Nathan Bradburn. At three-quarter time, the match looked halfway home with a 23 point difference.

Fully expecting a determined Bulldogs effort to close the match, the Swans produced some strong football from start of the last quarter. Goals flowed through Scott Nowland and a fifth for Thomas Byrnes, and the hosts looked to have been beaten off. Any such thoughts were shortly after dismissed, though, as the Bulldogs threw themselves at the ball to find their own major score. This gave them a boost, and in a desperate end to the game they kicked another two. The mountain proved a little too high but, and the Swans repelled their last attacks to run out victors for the second week running by 17 points.

There were strong performances right across the ground, but William Priest's was amongst the better, and he was named the Swans best. Thomas Byrnes got the nod from the players, improving again as he develops into a goal scoring force. Lachlan Rowling was not far behind, producing a magnificent effort through the middle and shifting the momentum at key times in the game. The Green Ant is likely to be deferred, but a clear winner was he who was late to the game after initially leaving the jerseys behind.

FINAL RESULTS

DOGS:	2.5 (17)	3.7 (25)	7.7 (49)	10.9 (69)
SWANS:	2.5 (17)	4.5 (29)	11.6 (72)	13.8 (86)

GOALS:

DOGS: A. George, D. Vidovic (3); J. Mulherin (2); F. Lamb, M. Pengilly (1).

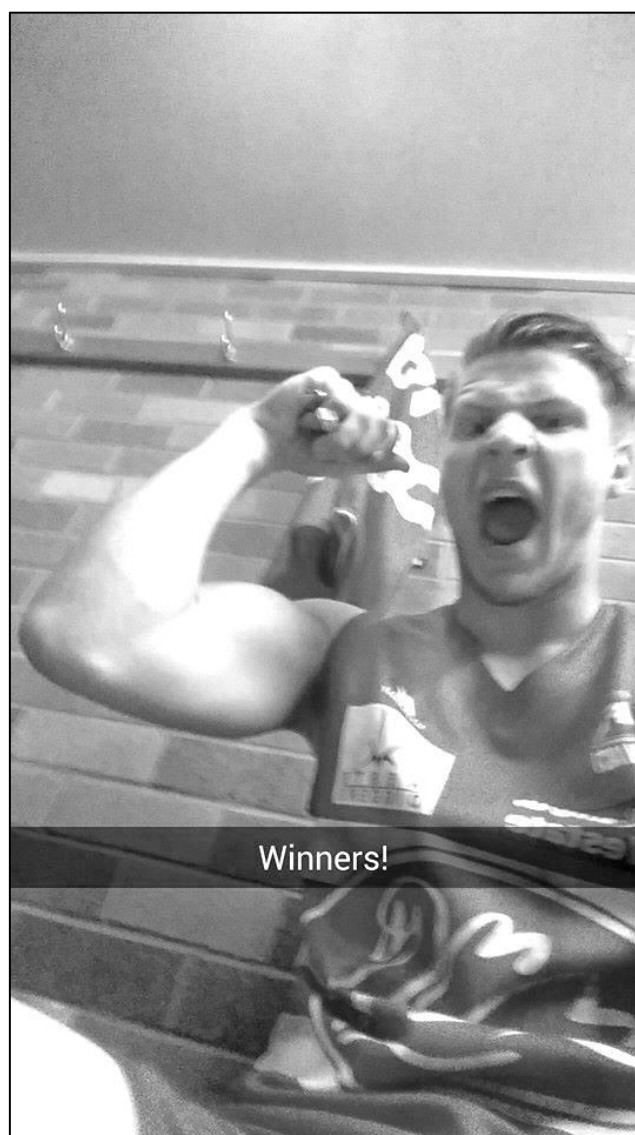
SWANS: T. Byrnes (5); G. Knee (3); W. Priest (2); N. Bradburn, L. Fox, S. Nowland (1).

BEST:

DOGS: D. Vidovic, A. George, J. Woolaston, L. Curgenvin, A. Hillard, T. Witts.

SWANS: W. Priest, S. Nowland, G. Knee, L. Fox, T. Byrnes, L. Rowling.

Gillies Medal votes: L. Rowling (3), T. Byrnes (2).



Round Eleven – 26th July 2014
Tamworth Swans v Inverell Saints
Number One Oval, Tamworth

Tamworth saw 15mm of rain in the morning leading up to a round 11 double header, which saw a heavy track for the Swans second 2014 hosting of the Inverell Saints. By the time the second match came around, the skies had cleared though and the conditions were set for a solid game of football.

Having started slowly in their previous two meetings against the Saints, the Swans were looking to match motors with the strong Inverell side from the start. The Saints read a different script, though, and their powerful midfield took control of the match early on. Feeding good ball into a nippy forward line, the Saints opened with six goals to the Swans two, and took a healthy 26 point lead into quarter time.

The second quarter was much of the same. The loss of speedy rover Hamish Bird with an ankle injury did little to stifle the effort of the Saints, who controlled the ball through the centre and continued to provide good service to their hungry forwards. With their defence looking near impenetrable, the Saints conceded the Swans just a single goal, and despite battling away the Swans backs could only restrict their opponents to five. Winning the contest in most parts of the ground, the Saints were well in control with a 53 point lead at the long break.

The Swans lifted into the third quarter, and took to the contested ball with renewed intensity. This cut down the clean possession the Saints had been enjoying, and in turn saw the Swans put together some clean attacking plays. This resulted in three goals to double their match total. On the defensive side the Swans kept at the Saints attackers, yielding them little space and making them earn each of their four goals. Though the match was gone, a much better third quarter saw the Swans trail by 58 with a quarter to play.

Any relief was momentary though, as the Saints midfield returned in ruthless fashion to start the fourth quarter. Kieran Te Velde proved tough to stop, posting most if not all of their five goals for the period before the rain returned and the heavens opened with about ten minutes to go. The Swans scrambled a goal in reply, but the game became more of an arm wrestle as the conditions deteriorated. Clearly the better team, the Saints were deserving winners, closing the match 81 points in front.

There remained some strong efforts from the Swans, and the team continue to look to push their claims for a finals berth with a month left in the regular season. Bradley Walters played his best match for the Swans, particularly late when switched to the backline, and he was named their best. Josh McKenzie won the Player's Player. The Green Ant was not awarded.

FINAL RESULTS

SWANS:	2.0 (12)	3.2 (20)	6.5 (41)	7.4 (48)
SAINTS:	6.2 (38)	11.7 (73)	15.9 (99)	20.9 (129)

GOALS:

SWANS: T. Byrnes (3); J. Doughty, G. Knee, S. Nowland, B. Walters (1).
SAINTS: K. Te Velde (7); M . Gould (5); R. Brien (3); G. Hadland (2); H. Bird, S. Fermor, L. Selig (1).

BEST:

SWANS: B. Walters, G. Knee, J. Doughty, D. Finlay, J. McKenzie, D. Wendt.
SAINTS: K. Te Velde, R. Brien, L. Selig, S. Fermor, M. Kenny, H. Chappel.

Gillies Medal votes: Nil.



Round Twelve – 2nd August 2014
New England Nomads v Tamworth Swans
Bellevue Oval, Armidale

In the wake of a two hundred point thrashing in their first trip to Bellevue in 2014, the Tamworth Swans made the trip to Armidale hoping to at least make the red hot Premiership favourites earn their likely victory. Despite some key late withdrawals reducing the playing stocks to just 17, the Swans remained relatively upbeat as they warmed up on an unexpectedly sunny day in the Tablelands.

The Nomads had the best of the early ball out of the centre, but found it difficult to penetrate a well organised and hard working Swans defensive line. With Damien Wendt picking off many of their attempted excursions inside fifty, the Nomads were kept scoreless for an extended period early on which seemed to frustrate them into uncharacteristic skills errors. Rebounding into attack, the Swans at times looked dangerous with the ball in hand. Possibly surprised by the amount of quality Sherrin they were in receipt of, the Swans lacked some composure in the forward half that may have cost them a chance to truly go with their hosts early. Michael Moffitt worked hard on the right wing and was rewarded with the Swans opening goal. The Nomads managed four in the same period, but the Swans took some confidence in being just 18 points adrift at the first change.

The second quarter saw the Swans maintain the same intensity in the contest, and matching the run of the New Englanders off the ball saw them maintain the pressure from the first quarter. Again the League leaders looked frustrated with the Swans persistence, and wasted a number of chances in front of the sticks. Three goals to the Nomads were matched by major scores to Nathan Bradburn and Thomas Byrnes, along with a highlight in David Cumming's first senior goal, and the Swans felt a little unlucky not to be closer than the 23 point gap at half time.

Rare as it might be to be happy with a four goal deficit, the Swans were the more buoyant camp at the main break. The Nomads came out in the third quarter looking to make amends, and for the first time truly took control of the midfield. Looking once again their formidable and clinical selves, the Nomads started to open the game up with strong run, and picked apart the Swans defence with surgical precision to give their big forwards their best service of the match. The Swans backline continued to battle away, however the Nomads piled on seven goals to a reply of just two behinds. With the tide turned, any sense of an upset had been killed off as the Nomads took a 70 point lead into the last break.

With a quarter to play, the Swans were called on to run the match out and not let the result blow out. The slick centremen of the Nomads still appeared to have an advantage, and with the help of fresher legs they had the best of the field position, but the Swans backline continued to fight hard to give them few easy scoring opportunities. Adam Splithof running off half back propelled the Swans into attack, and with the broken play the Swans again looked dangerous at times. This netted two more goals through Splithof and Nathan Bradburn. The Swans restricted the Nomads to four goals in the same period, aided late when a Nomads player was sent off for a dangerous challenge, and it was a brave effort to run the match out beaten by 83 points.

Despite the defeat being comprehensive, it was a courageous effort that instilled pride in the red and white. Adam Splithof was a driving force and was named the Swans' best, sharing the Player's Player with David Cumming who turned in a career best performance. Michael Moffitt was unlucky to miss either award in a slashing effort under trying circumstances. Young Zac Walters was most impressive in his debut as a Swan, drawing favourable comparisons to his brother. The Green Ant went to William Priest, who lived up to his reputation with a classic fourth quarter line.

FINAL RESULTS

NOMADS:	4.1 (25)	7.6 (48)	14.13 (97)	18.17 (125)
SWANS:	1.1 (7)	4.1 (25)	4.3 (27)	6.6 (42)

GOALS:

NOMADS: Z. Economou (7); M. Foley (3); C. Ballagh, V. Chakalisa, I. Graham (2); Z. Old, W. Whitby (1).

SWANS: N. Bradburn (2); T. Byrnes, D. Cumming, M. Moffitt, A. Splithof (1).

BEST:

NOMADS: Z. Economou, M. Foley, Z. Old, W. Whitby, V. Chakalisa, T. Granleese.

SWANS: A. Splithof, M. Moffitt, T. Byrnes, G. Knee, J. McRae, D. Wendt.

Gillies Medal votes: G. Knee (1).



Round Thirteen – 9th August 2014
Tamworth Swans v Tamworth Kangaroos
Number One Oval, Tamworth

With some warmer weather and a hair cut, Number One Oval was close to its picturesque green best as the Tamworth Swans hosted the Tamworth Kangaroos. The third tie in the 2014 Billy Holder Cup series might have been a dead rubber, but there remained plenty to play for as the Swans clung grimly onto their fading finals hopes. In an increasingly familiar tale, late withdrawals cut the Swans' playing stocks to see them only gather 19 for the clash.

Running to the Kensells end, the Swans started with fire in the belly, hard at the ball and moving it with some style. In some of their best passages of the season, the Swans posted the first two goals of the match. The Kangaroos responded, putting the Swans defence under extreme pressure through hard off-ball running and moving the ball into space. Some scrambling efforts at the back minimised the damage to two goals. Dean Finlay broke his nose in attacking the contested ball in typical Deano-style, which would trouble him for the rest of the match. Both teams traded two further goals, closing out a hard and exciting first period with the Kangaroos just 3 points ahead.

The intensity remained in the second quarter, with free space at a premium as neither team gave quarter. The Swans continued to link up with an effect not often seen this year, which saw plenty of ball head inside fifty. Some shots at goal, from tight angles and at distance, went awry though, and the Swans could not fully capitalise on these chances. The tight play saw frustrations boil over midway through the quarter, and a Kangaroo was given a fifteen minute breather after a second fight broke out. After a short break and a chat with the captains, the match settled somewhat, the Swans kicking two goals to the Roos one for the quarter to lead by 5 at half time.

With Josh McKenzie sidelined in the second term, the Swans were left benchless into the third period as the Kangaroos came out firing. Utilising their strength in their running play, the Roos moved the ball with guile to post seven unanswered goals. It may be the effort had told, but the Kangaroos were rampant and the Swans seemed to have no answer as the contest was killed off, the Roos leading by 42 at the final change.

Implored to not surrender, the Swans took the challenge back to the Kangaroos from the start of the fourth quarter. Kicking the first two goals, the Swans looked to have given themselves a chance of an unlikely fightback. The Kangaroos clearly had other ideas, as they shortly after replied with two of their own to ensure that any such hopes were fleeting. The teams traded goals as the clock ticked down, but the damage had been done for the Swans, 45 points adrift at the final siren.

For the Swans it was a feeling like the 100lb cod was on the hook but the line snapped. Other results meant that their finals chances were officially extinguished. Lachlan Rowling was even better than expected of a Swans legend, dominant at the start of the game and named the best in red and white. He also got a share of the Player's Player, along with Tommy Byrnes with a five goal haul and Shane Kilby with a tireless and tough as nails effort across the wing. A dubious Green Ant was awarded to Simon Collins for some Flashdance style aerobic moves.

FINAL RESULTS

SWANS:	4.1 (25)	6.5 (41)	6.6 (42)	9.7 (61)
ROOS:	4.4 (28)	5.6 (36)	12.12 (84)	15.16 (106)

GOALS:

SWANS: T. Byrnes (5); G. Knee (2); N. Bradburn, J. Doughty (1).

ROOS: N. Frawley, D. Overeem (3); R. Graham, R. Painter (2); A. Hudson, M. Hughes, D. Leon, C. Pollock, L. Robinson (1).

BEST:

SWANS: L. Rowling, C. Wilson, J. McRae, S. Kilby, S. Fairless, T. Byrnes.

ROOS: R. Graham, M. Hughes, I. Leys, D. Overeem, L. Robinson, M. Hopson.

Gillies Medal votes: Nil.



Swans hard man Chris Wilson secures this ball as Roos youngsters Daniel Leon (left) and Rhett Graham (right) look on. The Roos kicked clear in the second half to win Saturday's local derby. Photo: Barry Smith
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Round Fourteen – 16th August 2014
Narrabri Eagles v Tamworth Swans
Leitch Oval, Narrabri

With numerous players unavailable through injuries or other commitments, the Tamworth Swans scraped together fourteen to make the trek west to face the Narrabri Eagles at Leitch Oval. The trip out saw the start of forecast steady rain, and it was a bleak afternoon that greeted the two teams in what shaped as a tough day to be clad in red and white.

The Eagles clicked into gear early, and had the first chance on goal, but shortly after the Swans intensity in the middle of the ground lifted and they got an early jump on their opponents. Two goals through Thomas Byrnes and Gavin Knee put the Swans into the lead. The Eagles replied, but this was cancelled out when Maddison Smith used the open spaces to effect. The Eagles rallied, but were inaccurate in front of goals, and after they found two more major scores the Swans closed the quarter with two of their own to Adam Splithof and a second to Gavin Knee. At the end of the first quarter, the Swans were as surprised as anyone, but one of their better quarters of the year saw them leading by 8 points.

The second quarter opened to a much more determined Eagles outfit, who moved the ball much more effectively and started to make the most of their overwhelming interchange advantage. The Swans battled away and were beaten by some unlucky bounces of the ball, but were forced into defensive mode as the Eagles ran in seven unanswered goals. With most of the traffic in the second term heading in one direction, the Swans brave effort looked to have been beaten off, behind by 37 points at the long break.

Constant through the start of the match, the rain became heavier into the third quarter, turning the football to a slippery and uncompromising rock, and seeing both sides find it tough to take control and points turn to a premium. The Eagles kicked their eleventh goal of the match, but the Swans launched on the counter in an effective if not pretty manner to keep their defensive players honest. Midway through the quarter, a heavy collision between two Narrabri players called play to a halt as Ambulances were called, and in the conditions with the resultant delay a sensible decision was made to abandon any further play.

With both sides concerned for the welfare of the two injured Eagles, the Swans dried off with a quiet satisfaction at the effort produced in trying circumstances. Adam Splithof was their best, running rampant through the centre of the ground, and he was also the pick from the players. Special mention goes to Martin Burke and Paul Kelly, who did more than make up numbers and ensured that the Club lived up to its playing commitments. The Green Ant went to Andrew Donohue.

FINAL RESULTS

EAGLES:	3.6 (24)	10.10 (70)	11.11 (77)
SWANS:	5.2 (32)	5.3 (33)	5.4 (34)

GOALS:

EAGLES: M. Barrow (3); B. Clarke, T. Fagan (2); T. Dunn, Z. Lauristen, A. Madden, M. Miskle (1).

SWANS: G. Knee (2); T. Byrnes, M. Smith, A. Splithof (1).

BEST:

EAGLES: M. Barrow, B. Clarke, T. Fagan, G. Hiemoana, D. Hughes, R. Gibney.

SWANS: A. Splithof, W. Priest, G. Knee, B. Hunt, S. Fairless, J. Doughty.

Gillies Medal votes: G. Knee (2).



Round Fifteen – 23rd August 2014
Tamworth Swans v Gunnedah Bulldogs
Number One Oval, Tamworth

The final round of the 2014 season saw the Tamworth Swans hosting the Gunnedah Bulldogs in the first game of a double header at Number One Oval. Although both teams were out of finals contention, there was plenty to play for in the match, with the loser to be relegated to the wooden spoon. The Swans were expecting a genuine challenge from the determined Doggies.

With an early start, the Bulldogs had some trouble gathering troops for the opening of the match, with the game starting with just 14 players. This saw an eager Swans outfit launch into things, making good use of open spaces and hammering the Bulldogs defence. Two quick goals saw the Swans take early control, but managing rotations proved difficult, and as the on-field numbers swelled as more Bulldogs arrived the Swans structure suffered. Trading goals through the middle of the quarter, the Bulldogs finished stronger to kick two of their own to level the score at quarter time.

The second quarter became a very genuine contest, with both teams working hard across the centre and moving the ball effectively. The defence at both ends was looking frugal, but the Gunnedah talls gave them an advantage that they willingly grasped. The Bulldogs kicked three goals to the Swans two, which saw them enter half time with a lead of five points.

Called on to lift and take control of the game in the third stanza, the Swans must have received a similar message to their counterparts. The visitors took greater heed though, and on the back of a dominant midfield effort they kicked away from the Swans. With greater composure on and better effort off the ball, the Bulldogs kicked four goals and skipped away. Looking disjointed in attack bar some strong isolated individual efforts, the Swans were unable to post a major score. At the final change, the matter was on the way to being decided, with the Bulldogs 30 points ahead.

The Swans increased their effort early in the fourth quarter, and settling better on the ball they were much more effective going forward. Major scores followed, and when they dragged themselves to within less than four straight kicks with more than half a quarter to run some hope of a comeback was sparked. The Bulldogs are nothing if not determined but, and they came back harder again to kick back to back goals and kill off any such suggestions. As the game opened up, the Swans kicked five goals for the quarter, but the Bulldogs did the same, and ran out winners by 33 points.

It was a rather uninspiring end to a frustrating year for the Swans, who aside for some injuries were found wanting through most of the season for a genuine commitment from all but a core group of players. Adam Splithof continued his great late season form to be the best for the Swans. Janson Doughty was very good, especially in the final period, and he was named the Player's Player. The Green Ant went to Stephen 'The Black Panther' Fairless. Later in the evening, Thomas Byrnes was named the TAFL Rising Star, certainly injecting some hope for 2015.

In a post script, Gunnedah was found to have played an ineligible player and on that basis their score was cancelled and the match result amended. The final scores below are recorded as they crossed the line.

FINAL RESULTS

SWANS:	4.2 (26)	6.5 (41)	6.9 (45)	11.10 (76)
DOGS:	4.2 (26)	7.4 (46)	11.9 (75)	16.13 (109)

GOALS:

SWANS: T. Byrnes (4); G. Knee (3); S. Collins, M. Moffitt, S. Nowland, C. Wilson (1).

DOGS: M. Swain (7); J. Mack (2); D. Baldwin, M. Flannery, A. George, S. Hardy, A. Mack, C. Milne, J. Vigor (1).

BEST:

SWANS: A. Splithof, J. Doughty, G. Knee, S. Kilby, J. McRae, S. Collins.

DOGS: M. Swain, A. George, R. Cooper, L. Curgenvin, S. Hardy, J. Woolaston.

Gillies Medal votes: T. Byrnes (2).





Thomas Byrnes

Tamworth AFL
Rising Star 2014