

Under 12 report

By Matt Lane

Coach 2017, 2018.

Following the success of 2017, in which we only lost one game for the year, the 2018 Under 12 season provided far more challenges from a coaching point of view. In many ways, however, it ended up equally (or even more) satisfying, because of the amount of development we saw in the kids as the season progressed.

The beginning of the season saw the return of some old Yackandandah names to the club, including Judah Hood (son of former junior Matt), Ned Sproule (son of reserves premiership player Josh), Connor Wall (son of Damian) and Daniel Condon (nephew of Jordan). However, the side was relatively inexperienced, with only about half the players having taken to the field competitively before. Numbers were strong, though, and we entered the season full of enthusiasm. Brant and I focused strongly on teamwork, respect and enjoying football (having fun). Our belief was that if we could get those aspects right, the results would take of themselves. But, despite some close games, it took until our fourth game to register a win (against a very young and inexperienced Dederang Mt Beauty side). After that it took until the ninth game against Wodonga Saints for us to taste victory again, but by this stage we felt that the kids had 'turned the corner', and were now operating as a team. We went on to win five of our last six games, including a courageous two-goal loss to Thurgoona (who went through undefeated) and a convincing nine-goal win against Beechworth at Sandy Creek (a side that had beaten us by one point during the year). This improvement in the team was a very satisfying outcome of the season.

These kids challenged us, made us laugh, made us question ourselves, tired us out and energised us at the same time. Twelve players will leave the under 12s for the under 14s next year, continuing our strong development of junior footballers at Yack.

Thanks to Brant, Raelene, Laurie, Sam, Josh Sproule, Matt 'Chook' Wilson, Matt Bayne, Matt Hood, Damian Wall, Steve Murphy and all the parents who supported us throughout the season. We were truly blessed with a parent group that was nothing but supportive of all that we did.