

Under 16's

Coach - Mick Connell

Best & Fairest – Max Warren

2nd Best & Fairest – Shaun Donkin

3rd Best & Fairest – Aaron Wilkes

Most Courageous – Andrew Gilder

Most Dedicated – Patrick Connell

Best Team Man – Jake Chandler

Most Improved – Tim Swoboda

Once again pre-season training was conducted under trying conditions. Well done to the Committee for arranging the different grounds needed to accommodate all the teams. I would like to thank the Healesville High School and Healesville Senior Football Club for helping us out with training and match day venues whilst we were unable to use our ground. It should also be noted that none of the players complained about the conditions, they made the best of what we had.

2009 saw the loss of Jake White (knee reco), Dylan Anderson and Reece Culwick to Lilydale as well as Michael Davern and Mark Davies to long term injuries. Jake Chandler also missed most of the season through injury. We were however fortunate to gain Aaron Wilkes and Ben Leddingham (3rd year players), Grant Doyle from Coldstream and first year players in Tremaine Jensen and Andy Gilder. Chris Moate also came over from Yarra Glen but was also unfortunately lost to injury.

We were also very fortunate to gain the services of Worawa students Marcus Briscoe, Michael Webb, Leo Michaels, Norbert Spencer, Leon Penhall and Tyrus Conway. Some of these guys showed amazing speed and skills and really excited the coaching staff,



players and spectators. Everyone was wrapt to have these boys join our club and we hope this continues in the future. We also had a number of Under 15 players help out, in particular, Tanner Larkin, Clinton Wilkes, Tyler Black and Ryan Vouges. Thanks very much for all your help.

We began the season undermanned and lost to bottom teams Monbulk and Belgrave. These losses were to prove very costly in our pursuit for a spot in the finals. As the season progressed we improved and got some good players back into the team. As a result we beat some of the teams that played finals and really pushed all of the top teams.

This year we split the captaincy between 5 players. The purpose was to give more Kids a chance to develop their leadership skills. It's something I would recommend to all junior teams. Too often we see the one boy going through captaining a group year after year. This certainly restricts the chances for others and in some ways may not be ideal for the one who has the leadership responsibilities every year.

This year we also tried hard to really emphasise the importance of all players to team performance. We tried to make the more gifted players aware of the importance of trying to bring others into the game.

We also tried to make the less gifted players aware of that they have a real contribution to make and that they are quite capable of doing this. I was really pleased with the improvement shown by some players who started to believe in themselves. Choosing the most improved player award was really hard when you consider the improvement shown by Tim S, Darcy G, Mick Y and Curtis. Tremaine and Andy G were also fantastic in this area.

Another area that we really tried to push was benefits to be gained from fitness/healthy body. We also tried to encourage the boys to learn how to really push themselves, find out what they are capable of, and be a bit different from ordinary kids.

As I write 5 of our players are still involved with finals as part of our Under 18 team. Well done and good luck to Shaun Donkin, Max Warren, Pat Connell, Grant Doyle and Jake Chandler for helping out during the year and continuing to play really well in the U/16s as well. It's a big ask to play 2 games at this level and you are to be commended for your efforts and performance.

Finally I would like to thank all of our crew, Team Manager Kylie Rowe, and Neil who helped out at times. Johnny Lancaster our trainer. Our Runner Dave Nugent and Assistant Coach for the year Jake White. Once again I've been fortunate to have high quality, loyal assistants who really made the job enjoyable. I must also thank my wife Carolyn for her support and guidance.

Coaching kids can be a very rewarding experience and I've certainly had plenty of great thrills along the way. It's always very challenging and you always learn new things about coaching and about yourself. This year I've learnt that I'm now too old and grumpy to be a coach. I've had a great time.

Thanks to all,

Mick Connell

