

REBELS WIN IN '88

In one of the best Grand Finals ever seen Alexandra brought home the 1988 Tungamah League premiership with a barn storming second half revival that knocked Shepparton East into oblivion

Trailing by 34 points at half-time and with only three goals on the board, things were looking like the weather – wet and dreary. But to the player's credit, they stuck to their task and wore Shepp. East down to trail by only one point at three quarter time. The Final quarter saw them storm home, kicking seven goals to one to run out comfortable winners by thirty six points. The two main instigators of the victory were John Wallace and John Tossol. Wallace started off at centre half-back and was playing well before being shifted to centre half-forward where he provided the drive and endeavour. The same could be said for coach John Tossol who played inspiring football and certainly led by example. A fitting reward was when he received the premiership cup to the plaudits of the players and supporters.

The play. Several brawls marked the opening of the game before the umpires were able to bounce the ball. Both sides were keyed up for the big game and it took about seven minutes before the game got under way in pouring rain. Wallace took the first mark to repel a Shepp. East forward move, then Jones won a free and kicked long to where White marked strongly and goaled to get the Rebels away. This was nullified when Shepp. East quickly replied. Munro received some heavy attention as he marked but even with the aid of a 50m penalty he could only post a minor score. Shortly after from a throw in on the Rebels forward line B.Hortin

won the ball and snapped truly. Shepp. East again were able to answer quickly. J. Tossol then had a chance but his long shot was touched as it rolled through. Loose play then let the Bombers in for a goal and they had the lead. Shepp. East got the ball out of the centre quickly and goaled again. Their next attack was thwarted by a great spoil by Wallace but Shepp. East then goaled from a free. Norris after a great mark passed to McDonald but only a behind resulted, then a great effort by J.Tossol saw a much needed goal on the board for Alexandra. A downfield free resulted in the Bombers next goal to have the Rebels floundering. Munro passed the ball to J.Tossol but only a behind left Alex. trailing 3.4 to 6.4 at the first change. Shepp.East started the second with players running into space and the Rebels were looking out-of touch and not handling the wet conditions well. Fumbling by the Alex. players and lack of assistance for each other enabled Shepp East the next goal. The Bombers were running the Rebels, who were falling down across half-forward, ragged. They were handling the conditions much better and were running in numbers. Accurate passing saw them kick their eighth goal. Wallace was now at centre half-forward and providing the Rebels with a focal point and although you could see a lift the Alexandra's play it did not show on the score-board as behinds were the result of some much better team work by the Rebels. The half

time siren sounded to have the Rebels trailing by thirty four points and Shepp.East looking very confident as they left the oval.

Shepp. East were the first into attack in the third qtr. as they scored a behind from a free. Alex. also added a behind. B.Hortin then kicked long to the goal-square where the Rebels worked hard and the ball ended up with Cookson who snapped a great goal. Radford performing excellently in the ruck sent the ball to Wallace, on to Gunn, onto B. Hortin who goaled from a free. Hegarty with gutsy play won a free, passed to Radford who found Wallace then over to B.Hortin and onto White for full points. Wallace at centre half-forward was providing the spark that the Rebels needed and their endeavour had lifted. J.Tossol sent the ball over to the leading White whose snap toward goals was shepherded through by young Walker for the next goal. The Rebel supporters were now quite vocal as they could sense that Alexandra was now back in the game. Desperate play by the lively B.Hortin to win the ball saw his kick marked by Wallace in the clear, then aided but a 50m penalty goal to have the Rebels with-in four points. Both sides then added behinds before Norris sent the Ball forward where Walker kicked the ball off the ground for a behind. The quarter was drawing to a close as J.Tossol had the chance to give his team the lead but another behind left Alex. trailing 8.13 to 9.8 at the final change. It had been a great come-back by

the Rebels appreciated by their supporters who surrounded them and listened to coach Tossol intently at the final three quarter time huddle for the year.

The weather had also improved as the last quarter got under way. B.Tossol passed to his brother onto Cookson who saw Munro on his own 50 meters out on the boundary. Munro let fly with a magnificent torpedo punt to put the Rebels in front by five points. Shepp. East had fallen away as Gunn passed to P.Tossol who kicked to the square where White snared the ball and snapped truly. The Rebels were playing desperate football whilst Shepp East were now tentative and making the mistakes. White earned a free at centre half-forward and kicked long to the goal-square and a great mark to Walker resulted in a goal. From the centre clearance won by Radford and Wallace, Alex again went forward, Walker again marked strongly but B.Hortin added only a behind. P.Tossol, not to be outdone by Munro then kicked a long torpedo goal J.Tossol received unwarranted attention in the goal-square but that's all Shepp East had left as Alexandra were now well on top and there was no holding them back. McDonald side stepped an opponent on the wing and goaled from the flank as Alex. headed toward the premiership. Shepp.East scored a behind despite the efforts of G.Hortin and an Alex defence that was well on top. A Shepp. East goal, their first since the second qtr. was treated with derision by the crowd. The Rebels were not done with as they again went forward and rubbed salt into the wounds with goals to Walker and Cookson to turn what was virtually a six goal deficit at half-time into a six goal win.

Final scores Alex 15.16.106 to Shepp.East. 10.10.70.