

## 2001 Chocolates to Boiled Lollies

Whilst the off field leadership remained basically the same, on the field Alexandra had lost many of its premierships team including coach George Steiner who decided to devote more time to his family and his business, dual best and fairest winner Doug Cooper, Matt Johnson, John Tossol, Andrew Walker, Dean O'Brien and many others. Paul Griffiths was appointed coach.

The team that hosted Benalla All Blacks at the Showgrounds in the opening match contained only six premierships players Griffiths, Darren Austin, Cory Jack, Len Jenkins, Andrew Cumming and Colin Gesler. Brought into the team were many of last year's Reserves players and Under 17s David Ferguson and Aaron Heard who were no match for the more experienced Benalla side who won comfortably 23.23 to 7.7. Jenkins, Griffiths, Heard, Luke Ware were best with Austin the major goal kicker (4)

After the Easter break Alexandra travelled to Rumbalara for round two and included new players Earl Louw and Terry Blackburn (from Healesville) but still had many unavailable due to injury. Alex. put in a much better effort in the stormy, windy and wet conditions at Mercury drive with Austin, making the most of his opportunities with 7 goals, whilst Griffiths, Jenkins, Louw, and Cumming played well. The game was up for grabs at half time but the home team had the better of the third quarter before Alex. got to within a goal in the last only to go down 11.8 to 14.11.

Alexandra was at home to Thornton Eildon and included Jason Masters back from injury and youngsters Ross Cavill and Brendan Purcell in for their first games. In a typical "local premierships" battle there was little in the match until the last quarter when the visitors took control of the game to have their first win at the Showgrounds since the Elimination Final of 1976. Masters, Cumming, Jack, Austin (5) Andrew Maddison and Louw, were best in the 18.13 to 11.9 loss.

Alexandra was without Len Jenkins, who had left for overseas, for the trip to Yea and was thrashed by over 200 points by the home side. Masters, Louw and Cumming were the better players in the dismal 3.3 to 34.22 performance.

Alexandra were at home next to Violet Town and the young side were good in the first half but the experience and height up forward of the visitors proved the deciding factor as the game progressed winning 16.21 to 11.9. Boz Miljkovic, Jack (3), B.Fallon, Masters, Cumming and A.Heard were the award winners.

Alexandra had the daunting trip to Shepparton East for the next match and missing five players from last week's team were always going to struggle. Shepp. East got away to a good start and although Alexandra were competitive in the middle stages of the game, raced away to a big win 26.23 to 12.8. Masters, Miljkovic, Krijt, Austin (6) J.Kidd and Ward tried hard. The Reserves had the ignominy of going through the game scoreless against the League leaders this day.

Dookie United were next to visit for round 7 and despite the return of some injured Alex. players, were far too good for the home side and ran out easy winners 24.19 to 9.7 Austin kicked a further 5 goals and led the league goal kicking from limited opportunities. Cumming, Masters, Steiner, Maddison, and Ware were amongst the award winners.

After the break for the inter-league game in which Andrew Maddison performed well in the Central Goulburn loss to Kyabram, Alexandra travelled to Benalla and were beaten by over 20 goals 22.22 to 2.3 In a black day for Alexandra hit by injuries and lack of numbers, nine players showed great club spirit and put their hand up to play two games for the day allowing Alexandra to fulfil their commitments.

Returning home to the Showgrounds where Rumbalara were the visitors Alexandra started competitively but Rumbalara soon took control of the game and scored their second win of the season 25.18 to 13.6 Austin (6) and Griffiths (5) although playing with injuries were dangerous up forward whilst Mullins, Miljkovic, Gesler, Krijt, Ferguson and Jack tried hard.

Out to Thornton for round ten where the home side was far too good for Alexandra winning comfortably 19.15 to 7.3. Alexandra got to within striking distance in the third quarter but the home side steadied and went on with the job in the last term. J.Kidd, Ward, Miljkovic, Ferguson, McLaurin, Mullins and Jack were amongst the award winners.

On a cold July day old rivals Yea were the guests for round 11 and as in the earlier match at Yea won by over 200 points 35.23 to 4.4. Again, this time at home, Alexandra had nearly half the senior team playing their second game for the day as player numbers declined. Only 3, (Griffiths, Austin and Miljkovic) 2000 premierships players were available.

Alexandra then travelled to Violet town again with about 33 players to field two open age teams and of course were well beaten 19.23 to 4.3. Blakeney, Jack, A. Heard, Wales and Bourke shared the awards.

Cory Jack playing his 100<sup>th</sup> game for the club led the team out against Shepp. East but had little else to celebrate as Alexandra again were soundly beaten 24.21 to 4.3. Missing the injured Austin in front of goal Alexandra lacked penetration up forward. Mullins, Ferguson, Krijt, Heard, Ward and Ware shared the awards.

The Dookie game will be remembered for only a couple of things, firstly a positive, the three Kidd brothers Brad, Sam and James all played in the senior team and secondly a negative Alexandra kicked only the one goal (Colin Gesler) to 32.23 for the match. Miljkovic, Bourke, Austin, Snow and Gesler shared the supporter's awards.

At home against Benalla All Blacks, Alexandra was much more competitive and actually led the Panthers at half time in their best half of football for the year. Unfortunately the pressure could not be maintained and the visitors took control in the third quarter eventually winning 13.10 to 9.6. Andrew Stace played his 150<sup>th</sup> game for the club this day and B. Kidd, Purcell, Austin (5) Jack (3) K. Jenkins, and Ferguson won the awards.

Alexandra's second trip to Rumbalara resulted in another loss 21.18 to 8.12. The scores were not a true reflection of the game as the Rebels were competitive but weren't as effective up forward. A. McDonald (2), Blakeney, Mullins, Jack, McLaurin, Heard and B. Kidd were best.

Second last placed Thornton Eildon's second visit to the Showgrounds for round 17 again resulted in a big win for the visitors 22.16 to 2.2. Alexandra started competitively but a 9 goal second term ended the match as a contest. Injuries left the Rebels with only 16 fit players as Alexandra were goalless after half time. Jack, McLaurin, Ward, Cumming, Mullins, Ware and Ferguson were the award winners. Jason Krijt and Kelly Stillman played their 150<sup>th</sup> game this day.

Another 200+ point's loss at Yea 34.22 to 3.3 ended what proved to be Alexandra's worst ever season in memory. Yea had amassed over 100 goals against the undermanned Rebel teams in three matches. Miljkovic, Jack, B. Kidd, Blakeney, Purcell, and McLaurin were the award winners. Coach Paul Griffith had given his all but lack of numbers had severely hampered the team. Congratulations to those who stuck by the club, especially those who played more than the one game on many Saturdays to allow the club to fulfil its commitment. One of those was Reserves Coach Colin Gesler who won Phillips Medal the League Reserves Best and Fairest award and played many fine senior games. Benalla's Noel Coutts won the Lawless medal in the Seniors.

Alexandra's Cadie Fitzgerald won the League's B Reserve Netball Dianne Walker Medal.

Shepp. East 19.12 easily defeated Yea 10.10 to win the Senior Grand Final after winning the Reserves flag also against Yea. Thornton Eildon won their second successive Third s premiership whilst Rumbalara won the under 14 flag. The Under 14s were Alexandra's only representatives in the finals but they were eliminated in the First semi at Benalla by Rumbalara after easily winning the Elimination Final against Shepp. East at Violet town ....

At the Alexandra Football Netball Club's Presentations night awards were presented to

**Football:** Seniors/ Reserves/ Under 17s/ Under 14s.

*Best and Fairest:* Cory Jack / Colin Gesler/ Ross Cavill/ Chris Meyer. *Runner Up:* Boz Miljkovic / Dean Spinks / James Kidd / Lachlan Collard. *Most Consistent:* David Ferguson / Brendan Purcell / Jim Potter / Kyle Heaslip.

*Most Determined:* Sam Kidd / Karl Snow / Paul Purcell/ Angus McLaurin. *Most Improved:* Brian Ward / David Bourke/ Declan Heyes / Luke Bibby. *Best Utility:* Robert McLaurin / Jim Potter / Michael Gleeson / Vince Shiel.

*Best 1<sup>st</sup> Year:* Aaron Heard / Jason Williams / Neil Oakley / Ryan Carter. *Leading Goalkicker:* Darren Austin (48) / Dean Spinks (31) / Ross Cavill / Casey Southurst (56 CGFL award ). *Coaches Trophy:* Luke Ware / Cameron Simpson / Lachlan McLaurin / Justin Stevenson. *Best at Training: (Under 14s)* Tom McKinlay, Casey Southurst.

**Netball:** A, B, BR, D.

*Best and Fairest:* Sally Berg / Deryn Boote / Cadie Fitzgerald / Anita Keddell. *Runner Up:* Sue Haggis / Heather Shaw / Phoebe Mortenson, Johanna Davis / Lisa Cavill. *Most Improved:* Hayley Blakeney / Rebecca McLeod / Jessica Barnwell / Abbey Tranter. *Coaches Trophy:* Sally Krijt / Kathy Flemming / Sarah Hamilton / Melissa Stevens. Also on this evening the president Mr Ray Steyger presented his trophy to Larry Scott and Trainers trophies were presented to Anna Birtchnell and Campbell Smedley. The Best Clubman Award was won by Ian Hamill whilst a special plaque was awarded to Marg Hamill. Brian Green was awarded Life Membership of the Club in recognition of his ten years as Secretary and his previous work with junior football in Alexandra.