

## 2005 Last Year of the Central Goulburn.

Benalla All Blacks had transferred out of the CGFNL to play in the Ovens and King League leaving the competition with seven teams and of course the dreaded bye.

Alexandra, had re-appointed Steve Nichol to the coaching position and with a few of the talented Premiership players from the under 17s hoping to step up, were confident of a good season.

Alex. began the season on April 9th hosting Thornton-Eildon and playing for the Barry (Sprague) Thompson Cup which has been residing in the Thornton clubrooms for the last 12 months. Alex. began well with five goals to three in the first quarter and increased that lead to five goals plus at half time. The second half was much more even as players from both sides slowed down due to the warm conditions in early April. Alex. finished up comfortable winners 17.18 to 10.9. Adam McDonald, Tim Bayard, Sam Kidd, Cory Jack, Hayden Nichol, Tony O'Shea and Neil Oakley took the awards.

Round two was a trip to the home of the other old rivals Yea, where Alex. were set back on their heels by the Tigers who started very well with seven goals to two. Alex. fought back in the second 1/4 and got to within three goals during the third term before Yea again got on top and went on to win comfortably 19.13. to 11.7. . Best: Steve Nichol (2), Michael Bretherton, Cory Jack, Paul Francis, Brad Kidd, and Jeremy Heyes.

Round 3 meant Alex. were home to Dookie United at the Showgrounds. Alex started well and led by 13 points at the first change But the visitors took complete control in the second and third quarters with 14 goals to 4. The last qtr. was more even but Dookie U with their accurate kicking went home with a big win 21.5 to Alex. 13.10. Best: A.McDonald, S.Nichol, Ware, B.Kidd, Krijt, Allen...

Alexandra had the bye on June 30<sup>th</sup> then travelled to Shepp.East for round five badly needing a win to get their season back on track. Similar to the last game, this game was relatively even for the first quarter, before the home side took control through the middle quarters of the game, Alex again matched the ladder leaders in the last but were too far back to challenge the Bombers who won comfortably 15.19. to 10.5. . Best: S.Nichol (2), Francis, Steiner, Meyer, O'Shea, B.Kidd.

Alexandra were next home to Rumbalara who were unbeaten and had moved to the top of the ladder and it was easy to see why as they gave the Rebels a football lesson. The game was virtually over at half time and the slick Aboriginal players continued their display to record a big win 21.11 to Alex. 10.13. Best: Jenkins, Steiner (3), A.McDonald, Jack, S.Nichol (1), Heyes.

Alex. next travelled to Violet Town and came away with a much needed win. Relishing the drop in class, Alex. were able to dictate terms and got away to a five goal lead at quarter time. With the defence well on top and the forwards given plenty of opportunities, the Rebels increased this lead at every change of ends. The win 21.11. to 6.10. kept Alex in sight of the leaders. Best: Jenkins (3), Steiner, A.McDonald, Jack (2), S.Nichol (3), Heyes. W.Haggis was also amongst the goalkickers with 3.

A loss in the main game was all that spoilt a clean sweep of football and netball for the Rebels in their short trip to Thornton on May 28<sup>th</sup>. The senior game was close for the first half with firstly Alex. then Thornton Eildon leading narrowly at the first two changes but after the main break the home side took control of the game with a big third quarter and continued on in the last to win easily 17.12 to 10.9. Best: P. Roberts, A.McDonald (1), T.Bayard, C.Jack (1), S.Nichol (1), T.McKinlay. M.Bretherton and W.Haggis were the main goalkickers with 3 each.

Alexandra was next home to the Yea Tigers and in a close hard contest the visitors got home by the narrowest of margins. Only points separated the two local clubs at every sound of the siren but Alex, badly needing the win failed to get the points Yea. 12.17. to Alex 13.10. Best: McKinlay (1), Jack (1), Francis, Bretherton (3), Nichol (2). The season was at the half way point and Alex with only two wins looked out of the finals contest. The Reserves were second with only the one loss (to Shepp E.) and the junior teams and all netball teams were in the five.

Alexandra Junior players participated in Interleague competitions and did particularly well, firstly An Under 14 side coached by Peter Norris played against Golden Rivers, Murray and Picola Leagues and won the Carnival with Dylan Heaslip named as Central Goulburn's best then against Goulburn Campaspe where Brayden Norris was adjudged best. Tyson Biffin also represented Alex. In the under 17s Ryan Carter, Tim Cavill, Luke Heard, Zack Heaslip and Chris McKay all represented Alex in a loss to Kyabram League. Alexandra's Cory Jack represented the club in the main game last week-end where the Central Goulburn had their first win against the Kyabram League.

After a break for the Queen's Birthday weekend and another very successful Truck, Ute and Rod Show, Alex travelled to Dookie and again lost a close points decision. 11.11. to 11.14. Dookie started the better but Alex

worked themselves back into the game although not able to hit the front when needed. Best: McKinlay (1), Oakley, Haggis (6), Nichol (2), Bretherton, O'Shea.

Close to 100 people representing the Alexandra, Yea and Thornton-Eildon Football Netball clubs met at the Alexandra clubrooms to discuss the concerns of the above clubs relating to their playing future. The VCFL appears keen to allow the Central Goulburn League to fold having little consideration for the old Waranga Clubs.

After Alex's second bye on June 25<sup>th</sup> Alex was at home to Shepp. East and this time were on the right side of the ledger in another relatively close game. After being led out by Len Jenkins playing his 150<sup>th</sup> game Alex went to an early lead which they increased in the second and third terms to give them a 35 point lead at the last change. Despite not scoring in the last quarter Alex. aided by the visitor's inaccuracy were able to hang on and win 9.10 to 6.16. The win breathed a bit of life back into the Rebels but more wins were needed.

Alex. then travelled to Mercury Drive to challenge Rumbalara and after another relatively close game against the top side, failed to win the points. Scores were level at half-time but as in many games this season the opposition got a break to go on and win 14.9. to 12.8. Best: S.Nichol (5), N.Oakley, O'Shea, S.Kidd, Bretherton and McKinlay. W.Haggis kicked 3 goals.

Round 14 on July 16<sup>th</sup> was a home game against Violet Town and Alex was untroubled to record a big win against the bottom side. After an even first quarter, Alex then took control allowing the visitors only one more goal for the remainder of the game. Alex. were only able to add 4 goals as conditions deteriorated after half-time but had built a match winning lead early. The Rebels celebrated Sam Kidd's 100<sup>th</sup> game with a 13.12 to 3.3 win. Best: Nichol (2), B.Kidd, O'Shea, Oakley (2), Bretherton (1), McKinlay.

The investigation into football in the Murray Goulburn area with particular focus on the Central Goulburn League and its clubs was completed. A report prepared by North East Area Manager John O'Donohue was to be submitted to the VCFL Board on Aug. 7<sup>th</sup>, although the outcome was predictable.

At home again this time to Thornton Eildon. For the second time for the season Alex were completely outclassed by the visitors. After six goals to one in the first 1/4, Thornton Eildon won every quarter to record a ten goal win 18.15 to 9.8. and end any slim hope Alex had of playing finals. Best: McKinlay, Oakley, Carter, Collard (1), Dunell, S.Kidd. W.Haggis was the most effective forward with 3 goals.

Alexandra made the trip over Cottons Pinch to play third placed Yea and were again outclassed by the home side, After an even first quarter, Yea kicked away to lead by 4 goals at the main break adding to this in each of the third and fourth quarters. Alex tried hard but the home side had all the answers, winning easily 17.16 to 9.5. Best: S.Nichol (2), McKinlay (1), Jack (1), Bretherton, Krijt. S. Rowan kicked 3 goals.

In what was to be Alexandra's last senior game in the Central Goulburn League Alex. were at home to Dookie. Dookie with the wind assistance got away to a good start with seven goals to three, but both defences tightened up in the second qtr, leaving Alex. still three goals down at the main break. The Rebels got the first two goals of the third qtr before the visitors steadied and restored the margin to four at the last change. Alex. added 4 last qtr. goals but the Kangaroos were able to answer each challenge and win comfortably 19.13 to 13.15.

It had been a disappointing season for Alex. after last, winning only six games and not being consistently able to match the top teams. All other football and netball team had made the finals with The Reserves finishing second and the under 17s and 14s finishing on top.

#### FINALS

Aug 20<sup>th</sup> Qual. Final at Alexandra. Yea 15.14.104 defeated Shepp. East 10.13.73

Aug.21<sup>st</sup> Elim.Final at Violet Town. Dookie 15.15.105 defeated Thornton 9.8.62

Aug 27<sup>th</sup> Second Semi at Rumbalara. Rumbalara 11.9.75 defeated Yea 8.14.62.

Aug 28<sup>th</sup> First Semi at Dookie. Shepp. East 14.14.98 defeated Dookie 7.11.53

Sept 3<sup>rd</sup> Final at Shepp. East. Yea 20.12.132 defeated Shepp E.10.12.72

Sept10<sup>th</sup> Grand Final at Yea. Yea 9.12.66 defeated Rumbalara 8.9.57.

## SENIORS Ladder 2005

## RESERVES

## Ladder 2005

	W	L	D	B	For	Agn	%	Pts		W	L	D	B	For	Agn	%	Pts
Rumbalara	13	2	0	3	1691	1339	126.29	64	Shepp.East	16	0	0	2	2001	325	625.69	72
Yea	11	5	0	2	1664	1375	121.02	52	Alexandra	13	2	0	3	1242	766	162.14	64
Shepp.East	10	6	0	2	1602	1124	142.53	48	Rumbalara	8	7	0	3	1003	840	119.40	44
Thornton	9	7	0	2	1619	1408	114.99	44	Dookie	8	7	0	3	942	846	111.35	44
Dookie	6	9	0	3	1332	1474	97.37	40	Yea	5	11	0	2	903	995	90.75	28
Alexandra	4	11	0	3	1238	1476	83.88	28	Thornton	4	12	0	2	910	1352	67.31	24
Violet Town	1	14	0	3	940	1890	49.74	16	Violet Town	0	15	0	3	189	2066	9.15	12

Under 17s

Under 14s

	W	L	D	B	For	Agn	%	Pts		W	L	D	B	For	Agn	%	Pts
Alexandra	10	2	0	6	1505	332	453.31	64	Alexandra	12	3	0	3	1102	380	290.00	60
Yea	11	2	0	5	977	624	156.57	64	Rumbalara	11	4	0	3	1118	457	244.64	56
Shepp.East	7	6	0	5	1052	768	136.98	48	Yea	11	5	0	2	1080	650	166.15	52
Rumbalara	6	7	0	5	815	962	84.72	44	Thornton	8	8	0	2	828	622	133.12	40
Thornton	5	9	0	4	836	911	91.77	36	Shepp.East	7	9	0	2	808	690	117.10	36
Violet Town	0	13	0	5	312	1900	16.42	20	Violet Town	5	10	0	3	429	902	47.56	32
									Dookie	0	15	0	3	84	1748	4.81	12

CGFNL Best and Fairest.

Seniors. S.Greig (DU) Reserves.S.Spencer (SE) Under 17s. A.Walsh (Y) Under 14s. Dylan Heaslip (A) 36, Rookie of the Year T.McKinlay (A)

Goalkicking awards. Seniors. B.Firebrace (R) 62. Reserves. S.Reeves (SE) 91. Under 17s C.McKay (A) 51. Under 14s R.Power (R) / C.Tiller(TE) 49

Champion Club: Shepp. East. Most Disciplined Club: Alexandra

NETBALL B&amp;F A.Grade Adele Collard

Premiers Alexandra A, B and D grade Shepp. East. B.Reserve

The Reserves fortunately had a home match with the Qual.Final played at the Showgrounds. Alex. 9.14 defeated Rumbalara 6.7. after going to an early lead and being able to with stand challenges from Rumbalara in the second and last quarters. Best: J.Allen, B.Leary, P.Brooks, S.Hedger, C.Mullins, B.Ward...

The Reserves were well beaten by the top side Shepp.East in the Second-semi 5.5. to 15.11. Awards: K.Heaslip, M.Mawson, L.Russell, C.Mullins, T.Dunell, B.Van Lierop, B.Leary, H.Nichol.

Both junior football and D grade netball teams won their way through to the grand finals whilst A, B and B res would join the Reserve footballers at Shepparton East to contest the Prelim. Finals.

U/17 Alex. 10.6. def. Yea 8.14. U/14. 8.10. def. Yea 3.1. Netball: A. Alex 43 V S.E 51, B. Alex 30 V S.E 46, B.Res. Alex. 33 V D.U. 30. D Alex 30 V V.T 28.

The Reserves expecting to earn another chance in the grand final met a stumbling block in form of Yea in the Prelim. Final. Alex. were right in the game but some missed chances and turn-over's were costly leaving Alex well short at the final siren. 6.13 to 10.8. Best K.Heaslip, C.Mullins, B.Leary, L.Russell, T.Dunell, B.Ward.

Netball: A.Alex 35 d T.E.33. B. Alex 35. d Rumb. 25. B res. Alex 21 V Rumb. 33.

The Grand Final at Yea saw firstly the Under 14s runners-up for the second successive year, well beaten by Rumbalara 2.6 to 9.3. Best: B.Norris, D.Heaslip, N.Dundas, R.Loveday, C.Hogan J.Steyger.

The under 17s virtually had the game won by three quarter time and were never challenged.

Alexandra 5.5 – 7.10 – 10.15 - 16.17.113 defeated Thornton 1.1 – 2.1 – 3.3 - 5.6.36. Goals: L.Heard 5. Z.Heaslip, C.McKay, K.Munro, R.Carter J.Elkington 2. A.Daly 1 Best: K.Munro, L.Heard, R.Andrews, C.Southurst, R.Carter, T.Cavill.

Shepp East again won the Reserves premiership (their seventh consecutive) 13.7 to Yea 9.6 whilst in the last game of the Central Goulburn, Yea were 9 point winners 9.12 to Rumbalara 8.9.

Over on the netball court D grade had an exciting win 28 to 25 whilst in B grade Alex. also had a narrow win 33 to 31 against Shepp. East. In A Grade Alex. had a more convincing win 47 to 29 also against Shepp.East. Four Premierships from eight teams was a good result for the club.

At Presentation Nights on Sept 16<sup>th</sup> (juniors) and 17<sup>th</sup> Trophies and presentations were made to Seniors / Reserves / Under 17s / Under 14s.

*Best and Fairest:* Tom McKinlay (42votes) / Steve Hedger (34) / Casey Southurst / Dylan Heaslip. *Runner-up:* Steve Nichol (41) / Brian Ward (33) / Zack Heaslip , Chris McKay / Braden Norris. *Most Consistent:* Paul Francis / Ben Van Lierop / Tim Cavill / Tyson Biffin. *Most Determined:* Cory Jack (34) / Michael Mawson / Kyle Munro / Matt. Steiner. *Most Improved:* Neil Oakley / Brendan Leary / Lee Ragg / Jason Shaw. *Best 1<sup>st</sup> Year:* Tom McKinlay / Kyle Heaslip /Kyall Norris / Ryan Loveday . *Best Utility:* Michael Bretherton / James Harrington / Ryan Carter / James Heveren. *Leading Goalkicker:* Wayne Haggis (37) / Brian Heard (28) / Chris McKay (51) / Tyson Biffin (44). *Coaches Trophy:* Sam Kidd / Jeremy Allen / Ben Chase / Grant Halligan.

Tom McKinlay (right) also won the CGFNL Rookie of the year Award.



Dylan Heaslip again won the Under 14 League B&F



Dylan Heaslip, the club's under 14 best and fairest

Netball Trophies were presented to A / B / B Res / D / E.

*Best and Fairest:* Adele Collard / Sue Haggis / Melissa Mullins / Nicole Coombs / Ellie McDonald. *Runner-up:* Lauren Miller / Claire McDonald / Alison Rouget / Fiona Coghill / Eliza Weinberg. *Most Improved:* Ashleigh Coombs / Abbey Tranter / Hannah McKinlay / Brooke Davis / Stephanie Collard. *Coaches Trophy:* Jessica Shaw / Michelle Jack / Sharon Hedger / Melissa Warren-Smith / Kirby Welch. *Most Determined:* ( D & E ) Belinda Shaw / Lauren Steyger. Adele Collard (pictured) also won the CG B&F award.



Adele Collard

President's Trophy was awarded to John Westwood. Trainers Trophies: Ryan Carter, Haydn Simpson. Barry "Sprague" Thompson Best Clubman Award: Michelle Jack. Life membership was awarded to Ray Steyger and Sue Haggis.

On the political front after promising that Alexandra, Yea and Thornton Eildon would not be travelling south to the Yarra Valley and would all be playing against each other, the VCFL Investigation Committee, firstly recommended that Alexandra and Thornton Eildon would play in the Picola League along with Shepp. East, Dookie United, and Violet Town joining some ex Tungamah F.L. clubs, Katandra, Katamatite and Tungamah to form an 18 club competition and that Yea would return to the Kyabram League. Rumbalara would go to the Murray League...

This proposal would be put to the clubs.

The "Alexandra Standard" expressing the thoughts of most football supporters particularly those in the Murrindindi Shire stated that; "The VCFL investigation was flawed. There are claims of lack of consultation from leagues and teams through-out the Goulburn Murray region. The league based representation on the committee also leaves it open to criticism of self interest. There are better alternatives. There are plenty circulating in our three townships at the moment. The VCFL should look at them, set up a truly independent investigation committee, then look at a restructure which is based on the core values of country football and netball – not power and politics."

Following on from the above, not surprisingly the Picola League rejected the proposal to accept the CG clubs.

Real politicians including the member for Benalla Bill Sykes became involved, urged on by their constituents to work out a more logical solution.

By Sept 28<sup>th</sup> after being rejected by the Picola League, Alexandra and Thornton Eildon then made inquiries about entering into discussions with the Kyabram League Both clubs had been also been approached by representatives from the Yarra Valley Mountain District League. It was also reported in the "Shepparton News" that the Murray League were considering severing ties with the VCFL if forced to accept the Rumbalara F.C.

Meetings continued throughout October with no final decisions reached. The Kyabram League rejected Alexandra and Thornton Eildons applications. Reading VCFL CEO Glen Scott 's report in the "Standard" of Oct 19<sup>th</sup> where he suggested the club should accept the umpires decision it appeared obvious we were again heading south to the YVMDFL.

At a meeting in Alexandra on Fri. Oct 21<sup>st</sup> the club voted to appeal against the KDFLs decision not to accept Alexandra F.C.

Despite a forty page appeal document and letters of support the VCFL board met on Fri. Nov 18<sup>th</sup> and rejected the Alexandra Clubs appeal. Following this decision the YVMDFL manager Ben O'Brien (who is a grandson of former long time Alexandra player Bernie O'Brien) again extended an offer for Alexandra to follow Thornton Eildon and join the Yarra Valley. And as they say in the classics, the rest is history.

As someone who had been involved back in the seventies during the break-up of the Waranga League I was never confident that the VCFL would ever do what was needed. As I stated in my book "Up the Rebels" I have never believed that the VCFL ever had any sort of plan, let alone a grand plan for football in the area. They always seemed to stumble from situation to situation.

I also wonder if the Central Goulburn clubs that left the G.V.League some seven years ago made the right decision. From my position I did not have all the facts and figures that led to that move but I wonder if we would have had these problems if we had stayed part of the stronger Goulburn Valley F.L.?