

SEASON 2023

GRAND FINAL EDITION

# PANTHER CUBS NEWS

Official newsletter of Eltham Junior Football Club



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# PRESIDENTS REPORT

by Jodi Mitchell

*Hello Members,*

*We are one very proud club right now!! We went into Sunday's games quietly confident we could get the job done and what an amazing achievement winning four out of four premierships for our great club!*

*A massive congratulations to our U14 Black, U14 Girls, U15 Black and U16 Girls teams for Premiers in season 2023. You have all worked so incredibly hard to achieve this greatness and win the ultimate award. So well done!!*

*And just like that our season has come to an end. It's been an incredible journey, with lots of highs and a few speed bumps along the way. We have taken lots of learnings and the ideas are already flowing on how to make our great club even better in season 2024.*

*I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our parents that have volunteered their time unconditionally this season. Without your support and involvement we just wouldn't be able to field our sides and give our kids the opportunity to play our great game.*

*To the players a massive pat on the back for the way in which you have conducted yourselves. You have lived and breathed all things Panthers and the club is incredible proud to have you representing the red and black. It's now time for a rest, but make sure you keep kicking the footy over summer and we look forward to seeing you all back in season 2024!*

*Go Panthers!*



## **Newsletter Co-ordinator 2024**

If you are interested in a fun, simple role that you can do from home next year please reach out to Sharon - [ejfcnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:ejfcnewsletter@gmail.com) to find out more.

(I am moving to a different role for 2024). There are only 2 rounds to go so you could have a handover this season and be ready to go! Template set up you just copy and paste! 2 people could also easily share this role

# Volunteer Roles

(we'll keep asking!)



We hope your child/ren has had an awesome season at the Panthers in 2023. In order to run a successful season with over 500 players we need volunteers like you!

Many committee volunteers have children in the older age groups and will be finishing up.

We need fresh new faces and ideas to join the committee, if you can help out in ANY way please contact Jodi on **0408 134 066**

We are specifically looking for the following roles next season:

**TREASURER:** Sounds scary and we won't lie there is a bit of work, but you are supported by a fabulous team and if you are organised and have experience in accounts we would love to chat to you.

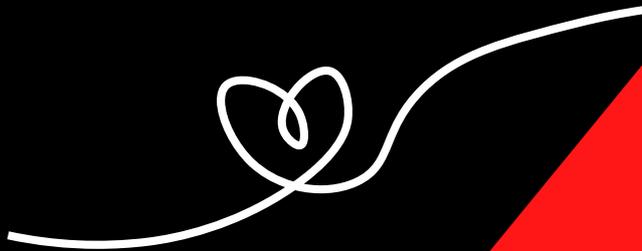
**TEAM MANAGER CO-ORDINATOR:** If you like being organised this role is for you, helping get new team managers started and supporting them with online paperwork and any things that may come up during the season, again supported by a fantastic committee and Age Group co-ordinators.

# U14 GIRLS GRAND Final

# PREMIERS

## Under 14 Girls Eltham vs Whittlesea

And so the final Sunday of the year came around. This coach woke up on Grand Final day stressed and wondering how someone like Kevin Sheedy did it time and time again. He must love this feeling more than I do. To Hurstbridge we go with the hopes of U14 Eltham Girls families resting on the shoulders of 26 players. In a weird twist of fate we were playing Whittlesea for the third time in a row. We'd beaten them twice. In the girls' words this would be 'Third Time's a Charm'. In the change rooms before the game the steely resolve (and the smiles) on the girls' faces told us they were ready. Word was that nerves were less than the first final. They were already conditioning themselves to the pressure. We talked about Contest and Connection. Get to a contest then get to another. Don't worry if you lose a contest you can make up for it on the next one. Connection was easy - the girls had it in spades. They'd been building it all year. They were ready to play for each other. Through the banner they went and it was game on. By quarter time we had a 7-point lead and captain Addi said 'I don't think we expected them to come at us this hard'. Never a truer or better-timed word had been spoken. The girls knew they were in for a fight. By half time the margin was just 5 points. It was anyone's game. Maya reminded us that footy was a simple game. If we stuck to our basics we had this. A 3-quarter time lead of 13 points turned into a final margin of 21 and so our U14 Girls became champions. The contributions came from right across the field and not one girl was beaten in their position on the day. Our back line was superb repelling all but one challenge for the day - the ever-reliable Mae, Neve, Maya and Charli held the full back line strong. The toughest half back-line in the comp included hard nuts Karah and Eliza U and the dashing runner Ash, who also ran through the middle. The wings were dominated variously by Katie who was close to best on, Gracie, Tilly and Abi who ran both ways - attacking and accountable in equal measure. In the guts we saw dominance time and again from Vice Captain Paige, Amy and Sadie along with Captain Courageous Addi who won the best-on-ground medal. They roved the ruckwork of the best ruck in the comp, Gabby who barely lost a tap. Up forward we saw a courageous performance from Kylah who came in unwell but gave it her all. She had plenty of helpers including Miranda and Charlotte B who both starred with their attack on the ball as well as Lottie and Chloe who did a great job through half forward helping to lock it at our end. Eliza W and Kenadee rotated through full forward providing a great tall and dangerous target all day while Charlotte M our goal sneak found space to kick our first and our second goal - a match winning return. Ronnie and Portia were terrific in the forward pocket with the latter stepping up when it mattered winning an inside 50 free kick which was delivered on to the chest of forward Charli. The last goal was a coach's dream as Tilly came sprinting from the bench halfway through the last to slot one through on the run which iced the game. As one player said to me when it was all said and done: "I think we won because we liked each other and that made us play well for each other". I couldn't have put it better myself. This group has written their own little chapter in the Eltham Junior Footy Club history book and they should be so proud of what they've written. I know their parents are and so are their coaches. Thanks to all who helped make it happen - especially Assistant Coaches Trav and Paul, runner Steve, Team Manager Antony, regular medics Rachel, Mandy and Eva and everyone else who volunteered so our girls could play.



# U14 BLACK GRAND Final

# PREMIERS

## Under 14's Black Eltham vs Yarrambat

Yarrambat went in as favourites after only losing 2 games for the season. One of them to our boys in Round 3 but they had beaten us on the next two occasions.

They said we were too short, they said we were too slow, they said we couldn't match-up against the brute of the Yarrambat boys.

We started the game strong kicking 1 goal 4, keeping Yarrambat to 1 point in the first quarter. The second quarter saw the Yarrambat boys come back kicking 4 goals 2 behinds using the wind to their advantage and us only 1 behind. Half time score Yarrambat 26 / Eltham 11.

The boys looked deflated. Heads down and expressionless sitting with their hands over their heads. They had already admitted defeat.

"Get up!" "Get up!" screamed Harrison Giles - "Come On Boys, let's reset and get this job done" We've worked our butts off and we are not going to give up...

Lose Yourself in the Moment, ONE SHOT, ONE OPPORTUNITY were the words that adorned our banner, and these words were constantly echoed by coaches Ange, Vic and Darren. With Ryan reminding the boys to get out there, have fun and take the game on - What do you have to lose?

3rd quarter our boys go in like mad men and fight back like we've never seen before with every player giving it their all - we kick 4 goals 5 behinds, they kick 1 goal 1 behind - we're back in the game. Our amazing parents and friends riding every moment and cheering the boys on with every bump, mark, hard ball get, tackle. 3rd quarter score Yarrambat 34 - Eltham 40. In the end we stuck to our game plan, we had fun, we took the game on and we didn't

let the negativity get to us.

WE WON. Eltham 54 - Yarrambat 50. There wasn't one player on our team that didn't commit, they are all stars in our eyes.

We did it! We are extremely proud of the boys and this is a time in their lives that they will always remember.

Enjoy the victory boys, you deserve it.

U14 Boys Black team - Premiers 2023

Kaz, Ryan, Ang, Vic, Darren and the U14 Parents



# U15 BLACK GRAND Final

# PREMIERS

## Under 15's Black Eltham vs Mill Park

You Bloody Beauty!!!

What a way to end the season!!!

Grand final winners!! Just fantastic for the boys!

Firstly before a quick recap of the game, I must acknowledge my son Jameson Irvine on reaching the magic milestone of 100 games for this magnificent club. A super shy kid who didn't want any acknowledgment of his 100th game on Grand Final Day, as he thought it might be a distraction to the team. Thanks to Jason Plant and Luke Sharpe during the week at training for persuading him to run through his banner on the day. Much appreciated by yours truly.

First quarter started at hectic pace with Mill Park peppering the goals to hit the front early. Luckily inaccuracy kept the score close, with a late 3 goals to Eltham leaving them with a 10 point lead going into the second quarter.

Second quarter saw a fairly even affair with both sides fighting hard for supremacy. Inaccuracy from both sides saw Eltham edge further ahead by 19 points at the main break.

The third quarter saw an accurate Eltham bang on 3 goals 1, to a very inaccurate Mill Park 1 goal 5.

Eltham with a 27 point buffer going into the last quarter. Last quarter was a tense affair, with Mill Park throwing everything at Eltham. Plenty of nervous and anxious parents on the sidelines watched as Mill Park gave themselves every opportunity to snatch a victory!! But to the Eltham boys credit, they toughed it out, and steadied the ship with a goal.

Running out winners by 14 points.

Shepherd was outstanding all day and deserved to get best on ground. Followed very closely by Cooke who was just everywhere, taking some very telling marks when we were under the pump.

Lawless and Dintinosante both had great games, using their height to be very dominant overhead. Lawless was fantastic in the last quarter despite copping a heavy knock.

Both Bongiorno and Streat had very solid games.

Multiple goal kickers included Park 2, D'Amico 2, and McHugh 2.

D'Amico was just great considering he had gone into the game with having the flu all week.

All in all, the boys should be very proud of their efforts today and for the whole season. A special mention to Cooper Plant who got injured during the finals campaign. The way you supported your teammates, and carried yourself on the day was just fantastic and your parents should be very proud of you.

Thanks to all the coaches and support crew during the season. Without you, the boys wouldn't have had such an amazing year!!

Thanks also to all the parents that support their kids in this great game that we all love!!

Go Panthers!

Cheers Steve Irvine

# 100



# U16 GIRLS GRAND FINAL

# PREMIERS

## Under 16's Girls

### Eltham vs Diamond Creek

The U16 girls are an amazing team throughout the season there has been many ups and downs. The girls are an amazing group of players and deserved to be in the Grand Final. Throughout the year every girl has contributed to achieve the ultimate reward of a premiership. Fitzy was in glorious form her runs not around but through packs and penetrating kicks were incredible. Fitzy was inspirational and played an amazing game. After a long run cutting through packs, she kicked one of the goals of the year. Scarlett J was voted best on ground, kicking three goals, and rising above DCW's tag on her she was in scintillating form. Proving to be a constant thorn in their side.

Eloise has taken her game to the next level and her consistency as a player has been amazing to watch. In every game she has been amazing, and the grand final was another example of how good she is. Eloise dislocated her finger came off taped it and went straight back on. Joss retired herself last year. As coaches we are so happy that she came out of retirement. This year her amazing skills have been on show. In the Grand Final Joss was consistently running off half back, playing above her size with her incredible skills. Joss was pivotal in the win and kicked an amazing goal.

Riley played many roles for us throughout the season and the grand final was no exception. Riley shut down one of DCW best players, consistently running off her opponents and kicking a sensational goal.

Jade's development as a player over the season has been inspirational. Consistently challenging herself and witnessing her glorious speed has been a sight to see. The grand final was no exception.

Eleri was again amazing. Stopping goals, playing on from kickouts and hitting targets with penetrating kicks. Eleri has been an integral part to our team's success. Elisha's body work and attacking spirit was a sight to marvel. Outsized she never took a backwards step. Throughout the whole year her presence has glued the team together and made us one.

Freddie has been an integral team member, one of our captains she is a mother, counsellor, and leader to the whole team. Freddie always delivers in every match.

We didn't know that Ella could run as fast as she did in the grand final. Ella's attack on the ball and pressure that she put in at the contest was wonderful. Roxie suffered a bad head knock early in the game, before she came off, she was proving to be a target up forward.

Paige's and Georgia's last month of football has been something to witness. Their attack on the ball and cutting runs assisted us so much throughout the final's series. Rosie and Shalee have taken her game to the next level. Their defensive work throughout the finals has been sensational to watch. Every time Rosie or Shalee was involved in a one-on-one contest, they always won.

Jaida new to football this year and you wouldn't be able to tell. Jaida was swapped around the ground playing both back and forward. Jaida kicked her first goal for the Eltham Junior Football Club and what a game to do it in.

Ameila, Millie, Lily, Dani, and Charlotte are all first-year players. They have grown in confidence and skill level throughout the year. In the Preliminary finals when the pressure was on Millie and Lily were incredible. With limited options in the Grand Final Charlotte tackled hard and set up a goal. Amieila has been an amazing team player sacrificing her game for the benefit of the team. Dani has had some injuries over the year but has not let this hold her back, with another year of football Dani will be a force to be reckoned with.

We welcomed Dom and Yuri back from injury it was amazing to see the excitement in their faces. Both played forward and were instrumental with their goal assists. Throughout the season they have been the barometer of the team.

Tiah has played her role all season. Tiah has only missed one training session this year. She consistently did her job. Tiah played a team game and snapped a beautiful goal in the Grand Final. Tiah works tirelessly and we would not have won the Grand Final without her. Georgie came across to us from Monty and boy are we glad that she did. There are many games where she has changed the outcome for us. Georgie is an amazing player and was sensational again in the Grand Final.

Keely has come so far this season. One of the first girls put on the board. Keely is reliable and very tough at the contest. She dislocated her finger badly at the start of the season and did not let this set her back. Her presence and voice on the field and reading of the game inspired us all and made her a force to be reckoned with.

Our captain Charlie is a true leader her grit and determination are something to marvel. Returning from injury to play in the Grand Final was an incredible effort and she again lead the team with her strength and skill cutting the opposition to shreds.

Lastly, thank you to all the players, coaches, volunteers, and parents. The U16 girls won this Premiership because of you and your efforts this was truly a team effort. You are an amazing bunch of people!





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