

SEASON 2023 - ROUND 14

PANTHER CUBS NEWS

Official newsletter of Eltham Junior Football Club



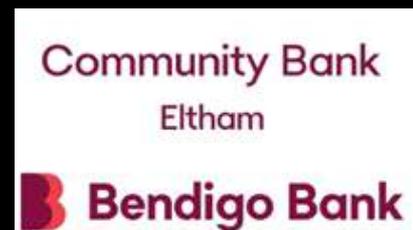
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Our Fabulous Sponsors



PRESIDENTS REPORT

by Jodi Mitchell

Hello Members,

Thank you for everyone that joined us for our end of season family night at central. A massive thank you to Fiona, Katie, the social committee and the u14 and 15 parents for putting the night on. To put nights on like this do take a team of people and we are really grateful to those parents that make the time to assist.

Wow where did the season go?

It's a bit hard to believe that we have already ventured through 14 rounds of footy. Again, I'd like to thank everyone for their patients this season with the council closure of Susan street. It's never an easy situation and we were lucky we had EHS as an alternative solution this season.

This year we fielded 25 teams and a total of 554 players. We had 6 U9 and 10 boy's teams and 1 U10 girls' team who were not eligible to play finals. Of the remaining 18 teams we have 11 teams that have secured a finals berth. Congratulations to our U17, U16 black, U16 girls, U15 Black, U15 red, U14 black, U14 girls, U13 black, U12 red, U11 red and All Abilities. We wish all teams the very best for your final's campaigns kicking off Sunday.

Talking finals, we will be hosting 3 weeks of finals here at central. Including 4 games in each of those 3 weeks. There will be plenty of footy to watch here at central.

All the finals fixtures have already been posted on game day and I really encourage you all to get out to the grounds and support our Panthers over the next 3 weeks.

Best of luck to everyone and Go Panthers!

*Kind regards,
Jodi Mitchell
EJFC President*

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 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 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.

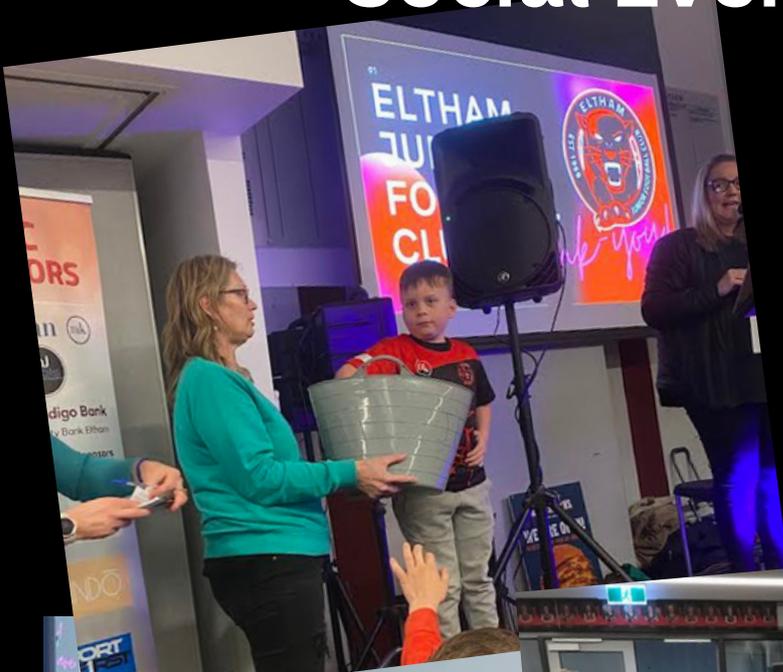
WHAT'S ON THIS SEASON - SAVE THE DATE

Being part of a footy club is more than just going to footy games it's a community that comes together to socialise and have fun..

Social Events 2023



Family dinner and raffle draw. Thanks Fi, Katie and all the volunteers dinner was yummo!!



All Abilities match report

This was the last last round of the H&A season and we need to win to secure a spot in the finals! We were playing Ferntree Gully. It was a beautiful day and the boys were all up and about from the get go! There was quite a big turnout to support the team and there was a great energy! We started strong! Angus kicked the first goal to get us going. Jace and Jye were well in control in the middle. Joe also had his best game playing predominantly in the middle but dropping back when needed. His running has improved out of sight. Andy, Brian and Sam W all had moments playing on the wings. Our defenders had a quiet day because the ball was down the other end for the most part. But when it was their turn they were fantastic. Lachie again was outstanding on the last line. Shannon was aging, setting the tone bursting through tackles. Vin also had a moment where kicked out of defence getting a lot of meterage! Ollie, Jamie and Rylan all were dangerous! Ollie kicked the sealer to put the game beyond doubt! Angus was knocked down and hurt in the 3rd quater. He sat off for a few minutes but bravely returned to the forward line to help his team. Ferntree Gully started coming back and the guys were a bit jumpy. Angus was flattened unfairly and the offending player was sent off. Angus brushed himself off and went on to kick the winning goal. All this effort and toughness earned him man of the match

U9's match reports

Under 9 Red Eltham vs Diamond Creek Creekers

What a finale...!! Our fearless captain for the day was Jude W and this kids fears nothing. He won the toss with heads because tails was scared of him! With the coaches urging the boys for effort and fun and a 1,2,3 ELTHAM, we were away! Our midfield was running hot in the first quarter, ensuring good delivery to our forwards. Copper K and Brax L presented as great options while Zac W (the fly) was buzzing around everywhere making it very hard for Diamond Creek to defend. The backline this quarter was hand picked to dismantle any chance The Creekers had of scoring. Hudson T wore his opponent like a second skin, while Josh O's opponent had no idea where Josh was coming from next. As the game went on our boys grew in confidence, Thomas S was taking one handed marks whilst writing thank you cards with his other hand. Charlie N took more marks than The Creekers combined for his best game this year. If you looked closely you could actually see a string from Josh B's hand to the ball as he roamed around the ground getting kicks at will. Marcus P was ferocious at the ball with his harrassing and tackling of the opposition. At one point I think he handballed it to them deliberately so he could tackle them again. The enjoyment in our boys was contagious with every player making a contribution. Archie L continued to find space and be a great option for his team mates - this included a great goal with a celebration to match. Brax L had a complete game with his tackling, passing and goal kicking, he was everywhere. Leo D put his head over the ball when he was required and offered great support and encouragement to his team mates. We knew The Creekers would work hard to get back in the game, however, Tyler R made it impossible for The Creekers to mount a comeback when he kicked 2 quick goals in succession topping a season of great games. The game was well and truly in our control but the forwards weren't content, they wanted everyone to snag a sausage. Through selfless football they achieved what they wanted, Zac W took a mark and could of kicked the goal but selflessly he passed to Cooper K. When Cooper kicked it through the middle, the whole team erupted with joy as this was his first for the year. Mason P had another tremendous game, his amazing marking helped keep the ball in our possession and bring his team mates into the game. He was doing everything: marking, passing, tackling, winning the hit outs and also kicked a great goal. So it was timely that he won the opposition's spirit award for best-on-ground. Our best-on-ground award went to big Max M, like Mason P, he always plays his heart out. Max M had a fantastic game using his elite kicking to bring his team mates into the game. This fierce competitor out worked the opposition all day! With that, our season is finished. 😊 Thank you to our beautiful parents who volunteered each week for the game day roles and a special thank you to our super Team Manager Kathryn P. Kathryn made sure the parents were up to date with all the club communications and their roles for the weekend. She also managed to keep the coaches in check at times. What a special season it has been!!! Amazing boys from amazing parents. We were very fortunate to have such a great group of humans involved in the Eltham Red U9.

Under 9 White Eltham v Mill Park

The final round of the season saw Eltham host Mill Park on a beautiful sunny morning at Panther Place. The boys were particularly fired up to play one last time together, and to send off the senior boys with a final win versus a strong Mill Park team that beat us narrowly earlier in the season. The game plan focused on teamwork – playing for each other -and focused effort and aggression on the ball.

Taylor & Sam were named co-Captains for the match. Mill Park got off to an excellent start with an early goal. Axel was dominant in the centre, finding plenty of the ball and snapping an early goal to level the scores. Darcy was lively, showing sublime skills to find Taylor for a strong contested mark against the flow. Sam was on fire, unloading longtorpedos and with the seconds counting down marking and nailing a long set-shot goal.

In the second quarter, Louis was an excitement machine, breaking a tackle, and driving the ball forward with a long carry & kick on goals. Zack won a tight ball in the centre, and found Austin for a fine mark and goal. At the end of the quarter, an opponent accidentally stood on Oliver's hand at the bottom of a pack. With shades of Dermott Brereton, he refused to go off, before marking and sending a long kick through the goals!

In the third quarter, Mill Park fought back with two unanswered goals. Isaac showed great resilience, battling an injury, he came off the bench to strengthen the backline & turn defence into attack. Christoph won an important contest in the centre against 2 opponents.

Angus won a shared ball at the boundary, narrowly missing what would have been goal of the year. With the seconds counting down, Axel found Carter for a courageous, diving mark. Carter goaled from 30m to bring the scores level as the siren sounded. In the final quarter,

Asher took a hanger of a mark across the centre that drew gasps from the crowd. Luca fought bravely in the backline, saving a certain Mill Park goal. Austin switched between centre & back, doing everything for the team. With Eltham down by 4 and only minutes to play, Sam took a strong contested mark, and slotted a long goal to give Panthers the win & send the team and crowd into a frenzy !!

All up it was a great team performance, with the highlight being the teamwork and courage as multiple players battled injuries. Best on Ground honours were awarded to Carter, Axel, Isaac, Darcy, Austin, Louis & Oliver, with Sam winning the opposition award. Thanks to all the parents and boys for such a memorable season !!

U9's match reports

Under 9 Grey Eltham v Diamond Creek

What a beautifully sunny day it was to end a fantastic season for the mighty Eltham Grey U9 champions.

We were 4 boys short for the day but no matter, the Grey boys have proved this year that nothing can stand in their way and today was no different.

I won't go into great detail other than to say it was a really fitting way to end a season that has seen this team improve week on week and provide all of us with enormous joy in how they did it.

These 18 boys have evolved into a team, a team that worked together, helped each other, encouraged each other, laughed with each other and gave enjoyment to all those around them.

It has been a great pleasure to be involved and I couldn't have asked for a better team to coach.

I look forward to seeing everyone on the 14th to celebrate this season as the Eltham Grey Under 9's.



Under 9 Black Eltham vs Diamond Creek Demons

It was a finals like atmosphere for our game against Diamond Creek Demons. We were full of energy after a solid last month of football. It was even more important as it was out last week, and we had already had two very close games with the demons this season.

Charlie was our captain and played with his usual skill and determination. It was a tight tussle early on with both teams attacking the ball hard. We were playing well, some of our best football for the year with everyone moving the ball quickly. Liam, Lachlan and Oscar were lively in the midfield with Charlie and Connor having a real presence up forward. In fact Connor was everywhere! We missed a number of opportunities early on as the wind played havoc. However, the quarter was owned by Josh A, who twice out marked his opponent and converted. It was a great start to the game.

The second quarter was tough. The demons were all over us in the midfield. Jeremy, Ethan and Seb battled hard and combined well with Jarrod to move the ball forward. We just couldn't convert even with the wind. Kingston and Harry battled hard with Henry looked lively and was breaking tackles with his speed.

The third quarter saw our midfield led by Charlie, Harry and Rory raised the intensity while Riley was dangerous across half back. Our hard work into the breeze wasn't rewarded on the scoreboard, however we knew that the hard work would pay off in the last quarter. Xavier was chasing hard and Alexander made a number of brilliant saves in defence.

The final quarter was a tough midfield contest with both teams moving the ball well. The highlight was three courageous efforts from Josh J in defence. In the end it was the difference – not that anyway was scoring! Liam and Harry were lively and kicked crucial goals to end the season on a high.

Josh J was rewarded for his great game by receiving the medal from Diamond Creek for his final quarter heroics, while Josh A was given our player of the match for his forward presence and team work.

James

U10's match reports

Under 10's Red
BYE

Under 10's Black
Eltham v's Mill Park

Sunday
Mornings
done
right!



In our last game for the season the boys played Mill Park Blue. This was the third time that we played this team, with the last two times Mill Park finishing on top. The boys were focused right from the start and they saved the best game of the season until the last round. The boys were led on to the field by our Captains Lucas and Jobe who once again led by example and played ripper games. In the first quarter we were kicking with a strong wind. From the first ball up, the midfield boys dominated every centre clearance thanks to great rucking from Henry and ball work from Lucas Seb and Ollie C. This gave the forwards a lot of opportunities to get the ball, with some highlight being Lucas passing to Jarvis who kicked to Rhys who kicked our first goal. In another passage of play Jarvis handballed to Cooper to move the ball forward which enabled Ollie C to kick to Lachlan who kicked our next goal. As always Riley was intercepting all opposition advances at the half back line. We finished with 2 unanswered goals. In the second, we were going against the wind, Harry, Luke and Ollie E were great in the middle. Jaxon T managed to take about 4 intercept marks in the backline, with Rhys and Finley also strong in defense. In the third quarter, we had the wind again and the boys made good use of it. Maximus Oli E and Seb were dominating the midfield clearances helping to setup our forwards. Some highlights from our forwards included Will marking in the square and kicking a goal. Sidney handballing to Luca who kicked a goal. Sidney marking and kicking his own goal. Josh under pressure gathering the ball and kicking another goal. At the end of the third quarter the boys were 6 goals up. In the final quarter against the wind the message was clear to play defensive and the boys certainly did that. Jaxton K, Luca, Maximus, Rhys, Lachlan and Will were strong down the backline putting pressure on. Jobe and Felix were great in the middle helping to extract the ball out. We managed to restrict Mill Part to only 2 goals, enabling us to finish 4 goals up at the end of the game. Back in the change rooms, the boys sang our club song loud and proud! Our game medal went to Luke and Cooper who were both in the action every time the ball came near and they were able to use their skills to handball and kick to teammates to get us out of congestion. Our game vouchers went to Sidney and Will who played well and kick goals for us under a lot of pressure from the opposition. Another voucher went to Jarvis for his determination to go into the packs and extract the ball. The opposition awarded Seb their medal for his strong defensive work and great work in the midfield. Well done boys! Well done also to Josh, Jarvis, Harry and Sidney for volunteering to play a quarter for the opposition as they were short on numbers. This showed great sportsmanship. It was really great to see all the hard work from throughout the season paying off with the high level of teamwork that the boys showed us. Really proud of the boys and looking forward to next season. Many thanks to all the parents for helping out throughout the season, thanks to Brendan for being a first class Team Manager and also thanks to Sam for being a great Assistant who had to manage rotations for up to 6 players every week. Go Panthers! Cheers Frank

U11's match reports

Under 11's Red Eltham vs Yarrambat

Under 11's Black

We were up against Yarrambat Brown at home on a beautiful day with Harvey, Zac our captains leading the way out onto the ground, reward for a team first mentality and shouldering responsibility. We were playing the top team and needed a win to secure a second chance in the finals.

The 1st quarter Dan was showing his intent for the day with 2nd and 3rd efforts. Noah put in a good chase. Harvey was competing in the air and the ground. Charlie was contesting hard holding out 2 opponents at times. Mitch looked dangerous up forward. Knox was competing hard down back. Playing into the wind we got off to a great start keeping the opposition goal less and getting one of our own.

The 2nd quarter Clyde was winning contested possession under pressure. Isacc and Mason were doing a great job of covering opponents saving goals. Billy was putting 2 hands to the ball looking dangerous when he got it. Tom OJ was running and working hard. We struggled to get the ball forward cleanly, we were working hard for no reward, scoring one point but keeping the opposition scoreless. The 3rd quarter, Harry C was doing a great job defending as he had all day marking everything, Tiger

was working hard, Jordy was giving us first use of the ball and following up. Harry L was using his football smarts. Cooper was trying hard. The opposition used the wind to their advantage and went into the last quarter 8 points up, the boys would need to produce another, dare may I say it, a

Collingwood last quarter fight back. The 4th quarter Dayne a passionate Pie man was the most dangerous looking forward, Zac J dominated the ruck and built on his impressive game. Zach, Owen and Matt ran the game out. The boys had done it again! getting home by 8 points to secure second place on the ladder and a double chance in a competition with 22 teams. What a season! To come second on the ladder after

the home & away in the top division is a great effort, to turnaround a 26 point loss the first time we played Yarrambat to win capulates the improvement and desire of this group. Parents tell your boys your proud, the coaching group are and excited to keep the momentum going into finals.

Go Panthers



U12's match reports

Under 12's Black Eltham vs Wallan

Our final game of the season had us heading to Wallan for the first time. Whilst the sun was out the wind certainly was favouring one end. Our skipper for the day was Will who's game has steadily developed over the season and we were looking for plenty of run from him. We also got to celebrate the 50 game milestone of Fletch. A player who is always looking to develop and not afraid to put his head over the ball when required. Congrats on the 50th and to your contribution to the team over the season.

In windy conditions it was always going to be tough scoring throughout the day. We started well with our mids working hard to create opportunities for our forwards with Jake getting us off to a great start slotting a nice goal. The pressure around the contest was fantastic with numbers to the ball and our run and carry game was beginning to flow.

The second quarter was a little more difficult into the breeze with our defence under plenty of pressure. The backs held up well with the amount of footy heading down there and we also managed to hit the scoreboard with JL kicking a great goal. The forward pressure was led by Sammy A providing plenty of zip around the forward 50 and Asher also chipping in with some great tackling and second efforts to lock the ball down.

Back with the breeze in the third quarter Jake and JL combined for another goal each. This was brought about by some good ball use through the middle and some handy long kicking to the top of the goal square from Johnno.

Heading into the last quarter we knew Wallan would never give up and were going to be dangerous kicking with the breeze.

Unfortunately for us they managed to kick a few quick goals and apply plenty of forward half pressure. Not to be out done our boys managed to claw their way back within 1 point after a classy snap for goal from Harley. The siren sounded soon after that and we fell short by a point. Regardless of the result the coaching team couldn't fault the effort shown by the boys all day. Mitchell was running hard all day on the wing winning plenty of contests, Seb provided options through the middle, Nugget and Dane combined well in the ruck whilst Balin continued his run and carry out of the middle. Johnno ran well off half back creating plenty of attack whilst Harley and Fletch were solid down back marking and spoiling all day. Joe's tackling and chasing was 1st class, Ethan and Blake also worked well out of defence hitting targets and clearing the ball to team mates.

The development of the team from round 1 to 14 has been amazing to watch. The willingness to help out a team mate, celebrate a win and to console each other in a loss has been first rate and we couldn't be more proud of the boys.

Thanks again to everyone helping on game day and filling the important roles. We simply couldn't operate without you.

Always proud coaches Russ and Matt.

Under 12's Red Eltham vs West Preston

We made the trek up the Hume Hwy to face Kilmore, who were 2nd on the ladder, with the temperature dropping 5 degrees on arrival. The boys went into the game celebrating fifty games for Hayden and Flynn B, with Rhys and Luka captains for the day.

Prior to the game we spoke about team defence, being tight all over the ground and being composed with the ball in hand as well as our positioning. After being a little stand offish with our attack on the ball the first couple of minutes, the boys settled into the game with some good chains all over the ground. Jasper having a real impact on the wing with his pace and follow up, Jed again giving us first use with smart ruck work and Ben G leading the charge from the middle. Aiden S finishing off some good forward entries with a well-constructed "team" goal which gave us a six-point lead at quarter time and keeping Kilmore to a solitary point. The second quarter Kilmore came out with renewed intensity and controlled the first half of the quarter, resulting in two quick goals and started to get the game on their terms. The boys showed a lot of resilience and fought back the second half of the quarter and on the back of some good positioning by our mids, our defence holding strong once again and concentrating on first option, were able to create space and opportunities for our forwards. We ended up scoring three goals for the quarter. Aiden B, Benny G and Jasper all saluting. Aiden B was very impressive with his forward craft and second and third efforts. We went into half-time full of confidence with a thirteen-point lead. Kilmore challenged us again in the third quarter with some intense attack on the ball, however the boys held strong and matched Kilmore around the contest and our mids providing some good service, but not quite able to maximise our opportunities when going forward, kicking one goal for the quarter with Luke Bell kicking a classy on the run goal. We held a slender one goal lead at three quarter time and the message to the boys was not to become complacent and play the full fifteen minutes to give themselves, the best chance of playing finals the next week. The final quarter was pulsating with an increase in contested ball. It was a battle of the defences, for the first half of the quarter, Myles and Luka positioning themselves well to thwart Kilmore's forward entries. We were not quite able to finish off some of our chains when we finally got inside fifty, however the boys showed a lot of character to lock the ball in for the back half of the quarter. We unfortunately lacked a little polish to put scoreboard pressure on, however managing enough points to see out a draw. Our second for the year!

Best player awards for the day went to Paddy D who used his speed to great effect on the wing, running hard all day and was very creative with his ball use, James E who never stops trying and is "in and under" every chance he gets and Flynn F who was also creative up forward bringing other plays into the game with good use of hands and positioning.

Overall, a very entertaining and well contested game to witness. The boys doing enough with a draw to earn the right to play finals. A fantastic effort given where we came from at the start of the season.

Best of luck for next week boys, we are all behind you!

Nathan/Keith/Richard



U14's match reports

Under 14's Black Eltham vs Whittlesea

Conditions were near perfect for footy apart from the wind favouring the railway end.

The main focus coming into the match was to work on gameplay in preparation for upcoming final matches, one of those was to select a few of the boys in different positions. These boys stepped up to the tasks which justified the tactic. The wind proved to be misleading resulting in the boys misjudging the fall of the ball allowing our opponents to kick a few goals.

The boys outplayed their direct opponent in most positions and the skill level around the ground as well as the run and carry missing from our game last week proved to be the difference.

Well done to the boys who played their guts out all year to secure second place!! Bring on the finals. Go Panthers!!

Ryan, Ange, Vic and Karen

Under 14's Red Eltham vs Hurstbridge

Final game of the year for the boys, and a simple case of Hurstbridge being bigger, faster and stronger. The boys toiled valiantly all day, improving in the 2nd half and making the opposition really fight for their scores. We set a strong goal of scoring in the final term and wrapped to see the boys kick 2 goals.

We've seen good growth from the boys throughout the season, some took good strides in ball skills, others in their competitiveness. The boys always have a smile on their faces and their determination and enthusiasm was endless.

I'd to say a huge thanks to Nick(TM) for all her hard work, not only managing our team but wrangling players from the u12's/u13's to fill out our side week in, week out. Nick, for coming on board as assistant coach, its was great having someone to help rally the boys, and lastly to the parents, without the volunteers every week, games don't happen.

Mat



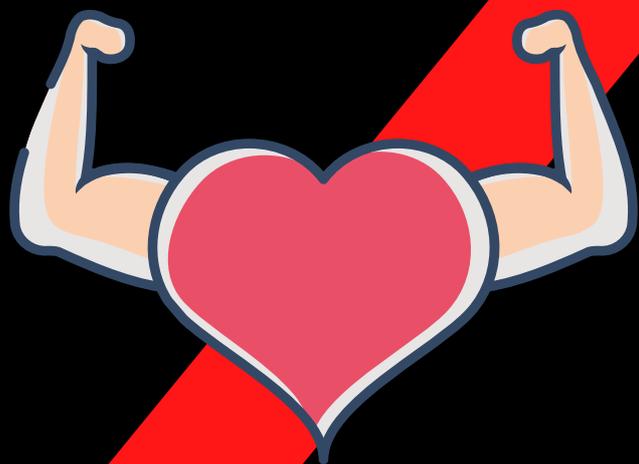
**"TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING
CAN BE WONDERFUL."**

- MAE WEST



U10/12's girls match reports

Under 10's Girls



Under 12's Girls Eltham vs Laurimar

With a place in finals now off the cards, the girls could have been forgiven for not being overly excited to be meeting the more physical, top of the ladder Laurimar for our return game at Susan St. But the Panther girls were keen to prove a point and all turned up to finish the season out with pride.

The Eltham girls were sensational in the way they approached the game and had a significant period of the day where they dominated the play. Charlotte again presented well in the ruck with support from Emma. Willow and Ruby dominated ground ball and kept the ball in our forward half for much of the day. Charlie read the play beautifully through the middle of the ground and kept the ball moving our way. Strong tackling pressure from Zoe and Teia showed the Laurimar girls that there would be no backing down.

As has been the story for a lot of the season, the girls have played amazing football and worked well as a team, but at times, we just didn't get reward for our effort in the way of goals.

Going into the last quarter 3 goals down, the Panther spirit remained alive with determination to finish the season well. Our girls were able to control the ball and as the opposition slowed, our girls grew in confidence. A number of the girls were able to find space and Emma was able to finish with a great goal.

In the end, it was a spirited 16 point loss but our extremely proud group were impressed to have kept Laurimar scoreless in the last quarter and kicked a goal themselves. Unfortunately, that brought our season to an end and what a season it has been. The girls have grown together as a team every week and have been a heap of fun to coach. Not only have the girls finished every week with a smile on their faces, they have given the coaches and parents plenty to smile about too.

The season has been a great one, regardless of the win-loss record. Many of our losses could have easily gone the other way. The team was a mixed bag of all ages, sizes and abilities. However, the one thing they all had in spades was determination. No game was over until the final siren sounded and the intensity of the group was relentless. Great season girls, we are looking forward to seeing you all back next year.

GO PANTHERS!!

Brendan, Matt, Cam

U14/16's girls match reports

Under 14's Girls Eltham vs Whittlesea

We played the top side Whittlesea today in the last round before finals. We were guaranteed a finals berth going in - a win would give us a chance to take second but we'd need second place Sth Morang to lose to 5th place Darebin. Co-captains for the day were Portia and Eliza U.

If that wasn't exciting enough we were also celebrating Ashley's 50th game and this gave the girls a great rev up before we ran out. We lost the toss and kicked into a stiff first-quarter breeze. Suffice to say we were very happy to be one goal to a point at qtr time thanks to a tough effort from the back line and positive play up forward. A set shot goal from Charli was superb. In the second qtr we took advantage of the wind to score two to nothing. This included a terrific long goal from Addi and a set shot from about 35m out from Ash. Despite a 17-degree sunny day the Whittlesea coach took his girls into the change rooms for half-time address. They seemed rattled.

Our message to the girls was to stay focused. The third quarter into the wind is going to be crucial. This became clear when Whittlesea kicked a goal in the first minute. Where to for our girls from here? They switched on immediately and we snagged one goal back through Eliza W while conceding about 4 rushed behinds. It was as good as break-even for the quarter.

The three-quarter time message was clear: the game is not won. They won't stop and neither can we. We have the wind. We have to use it. Our full forward Eliza W took a ripper at the top of the goal square inside the first 5 minutes and snagged her second goal. Charlotte B topped it off with a great set shot from about 25 out and we ran out winners 6 goals to 1, reversing the score line they beat us by early in the season.

To top it off South Morang got beat by Darebin so we snagged second place on percentage. Now we play Whittlesea again in the first round of the finals for a place in the GF.

It was very hard to separate the best players as we had contributors across the ground. Kyla was again dominant in the centre showing her strength around contests. Addi won a load of ball through the middle the and Ash in her 50th found a way to take her game to another level, mainly off half back. Katie B was tireless in her tackling and got some good possessions under pressure while Abi also continued her good form. Co-captain Eliza U was ever-reliable across half back and Paige also played another great game with ferocious attack on the ball.

The girls have proved themselves ready for finals and our improvement every week means we have a great chance ahead of us. One week at a time from here - let's do it!

Under 16's Girls Eltham vs Monty

In an unforgettable match, the U16 Girls team delivered a breathtaking performance, showcasing their extraordinary talent and unwavering determination, which led to a remarkable victory that left spectators in awe. Throughout the game, their unity and selfless teamwork were on full display, creating opportunities and keeping the opposition, Monty, constantly on their toes. It was evident that this team was not merely a group of individuals but a closely-knit family united by a common goal.

Tiah's 50th game was a momentous achievement, and she truly shined as the star of the day, displaying exceptional skills and precision in her ruck work. Scarlett F and Jade were a dynamic duo, executing impressive runs that left the opposition's defence struggling to keep up. Jaida's incredible mark became a pivotal moment, demonstrating her remarkable athleticism and timing, which inspired her teammates and turned the game in favour of Eltham.

Shaelee and Eleri were instrumental in repelling Monty's attacks and saving numerous goals, playing with immense skill and determination. Georgie, after a somewhat quiet first half, emerged as a formidable force in the second half, contributing significantly to the team's success. Joss was a versatile player who excelled in multiple roles, especially as the loose player in the backline, disrupting Monty's advances and winning crucial possessions. Charlie, Keely, Georgia, and Riley demonstrated relentless energy throughout the day, playing pivotal roles in both offense and defence with impeccable positioning. Paige, Rosie, and Ella showcased remarkable second efforts and tenacious body work to win the ball, a testament to their effort and training. Amelia, Roxie, and Elisha were relentless in their pursuit of the ball, creating numerous opportunities and contests.

Eloise's determination was truly awe-inspiring as she played through sickness, showing unmatched tenacity, and becoming an unstoppable force on the field. Her resilience and commitment to the team were exemplary. Despite being unavailable to play, Millie, Dom, Charlotte, Yuri, Dani, and Freddie contributed to the victory with their enthusiastic support from the bench. Scarlett J acted as a dedicated runner, delivering messages, and providing invaluable coaching support during the game. Congratulations to the U16 girls for their incredible team effort and the unforgettable victory. With only one player on the bench, your efforts were nothing short of amazing, and you should be immensely proud of your achievement. The U16 girls demonstrated that when talent, determination, and unity come together, success becomes inevitable.



U15's match reports

Under 15's Red Eltham vs Whittlesea

What a game to be involved with!!

This season has been an unbelievable turnaround in comparison to last season where we didn't win a game after grading. The boys had it all before them, heading into the last round with the scenario being simple, win and we are playing finals, lose and its season over!!

The theme for the day was BELIEF... more importantly it was self-belief, as the coaches and parents already believed in the boys and knew what they were capable of... we just needed them to do the same.

In a sign of UNITY and/or intimidation it was our 5 leaders (Jake, Alex, Jack, Noah & Archie) that went as one into the middle before the game to toss the coin and whilst we didn't win the toss the Whittlesea player certainly felt the energy these boys were generating and it worked, the lads came out in the first quarter and were relentless at the contest, giving the opposition no time or space and creating plenty of opportunities, going into the 1st break 2 goals up, against the wind!

The 2nd quarter was much the same as the first, with the pressure meter peaking, talk was up, our backline & midfield were dominating, and our forward line were working in unison. This was the best 1st half the boys had put together all season. The belief was continuing to grow, and you could see it in all the players faces. A much-needed rest at half time, in hindsight the talk was probably too positive.

The 3rd quarter saw us reduce our intensity and begin to only run one-way, the opposition started getting on top and if it wasn't for the efforts of our back 6 we would have gone into the last break trailing, as it turned out the siren couldn't sound quick enough and afforded us the opportunity of maintaining a very tender 4 point lead. All Bets were now off and coach Chris implored the boys to find another level, dig deep and fight for 20 more minutes. It was solely up to the boys to determine their fate this season.

And Wow Wee what an incredible final quarter did the boys produce. Within the space of 5 minutes, we piled 4 unanswered goals and the pressure meter had flown completely off the charts... supported by a massive contingent of U15 Black players cheering on their mates the boys steam rolled the 2nd placed team to run away with a 6-goal win and securing a well-deserved ticket to the finals.

All of the coaches were extremely PROUD of the boys and we all collectively agree that this was the greatest game of footy we have been involved in... see what a little bit of self-belief can do!!

Chris, Sharon, Scott, Dave, Simon, Ed & all the parent helpers.

Under 15's Black Eltham vs Diamond Creek

Hi all,

A few sore boys from the Round 13 encounter with Montmorency saw Wednesday night's training session being mixed up a little ,with the boys having a bit of fun at the pool.

Not sure if Luke Sharpe's rumoured Milwaukee budgie smugglers made an appearance but I guess that's a conversation to be had at a post season drink at The Church (Eltham Pub).

Round 14 saw the boys playing Diamond Creek at Coventry Oval. First quarter, the boys got off to a terrific start with 5 unanswered goals.

West with two beautiful goals.

Second quarter was a low scoring affair with the only goal coming for Eltham. Half time 43-1.

The boys put the foot down in the Third Quarter with another 4 with Diamond Creek getting their first ,thanks to the Mercy Rule.

Last Quarter saw Diamond Creek put on another couple to Elthams solitary one.

Overall a very clinical display by the whole team.

Tranquilli, McCluskey, Shepherd and Sharpe racking up possessions at will. Cameron and Lawless with very solid performances.

Dintinosante with some telling intercept marks.

Park with a brilliant running with the flight of the ball mark, and finishing it with goal .Planty was super dangerous around the sticks ,with a great 2 goal effort .

With Mill Park losing to Yarrambat , the lads are back at Coventry Oval to face Montmorency in a cut throat first final.

Go Panthers!!!

Cheers Steve Irvine



U16's match reports

Under 16's Red Eltham vs Epping

In a real show of defiance and strength, our team finished the season with almost a full squad, as players returned from injury for one final tilt.

It was also a dual celebration as Calais L and Joel B were playing their 100th and 50th games together.

Joel has been our gun goalkicker all season and has been on an unbroken goalkicking streak since Round 3.

Calais has been our gun small defender, and the coach made the call pre-game that watching Calais' development over the past few years was probably the most enjoyable aspect of his coaching experience. From the player who lacked confidence in himself, to the self-assured contested ball winning beast he is today, it is a credit to his perseverance and his want to be his absolute best.

It is fitting that they both found themselves in the goals and best players again to put a full stop on their seasons.

Unfortunately, when we put our heads on our pillows on Saturday night, we couldn't haven't dreamt the kind of performance that we gave today, after such a positive match the week before.

Some wayward kicking in the first quarter when we had a strong breeze behind us, was a confidence sapper and left us with too much to do in the second quarter to thwart our opposition when it was their turn.

It seemed evident that many of our players had already put the cue in the rack for 2023 not long after half time, as the 'hope bubble' had been burst.

Lucas R never threw the towel in as he accumulated possessions in a valiant attempt to keep the ball moving our way.

Ethan A finished his year with a flurry of best on ground performances in defence, and he is a clear example of a player who has had his 'lightbulb moment' and was making the most of his new found confidence.

Oliver R similarly found his groove on the wing by the years end, and 2024 will be a great year for him as his game awareness matures.

Lachy S committed himself to quelling their best player and he did an excellent job, as his opponent was barely noticeable all game.

The end result was a disappointing one for our squad, and it was hard to be all smiles as the season came to a close.

However, our players held together in extreme adversity and they all should be proud of the fact that they showed tremendous character and commitment. Other teams would have fractured and folded before seasons end – yet we had our most numbers for the season in Rd 14.

Some players will go on in 2024 and some will find enjoyment in other things. But I would like to think that some lasting friendships were made and that some important life lessons were learnt along the way.

Thanks to all the coaching crew and parent helpers for their continued assistance on game day, particularly our boundary umpires and runner, who shouldn't have to be running long distances at our age. But we do it anyway!!

Hope to see you all in 2024.

Simon, Brendan, Jason, Clint & Gary.

Under 16's Black Eltham vs Whittlesea

Today's last home and away game saw second position and the double chance on the line against Whittlesea. After drawing with them the first time around in very wet conditions we were confident that the boys could reverse the result this time at home.

Great to see Jack reach 100 games and he gave a typical Hartney clever under-rated performance. A fine day at Panther Place however a strong breeze to the rail bridge end meant that we had to be solid in the first quarter against it. A two goal to one quarter was a good result as they missed a couple of opportunities. The

midfield was solid with Nate getting first hand to most contests, and the injection of Bondy into the middle worked well with Ollie and Ashton. Some silly shallow entries into the forward line made it hard for the forwards against the wind, limiting our scoring opportunities. In the second quarter we started to work together a bit better. Repeat deep entries gave the forwards chances, and

Luke, Lucas, Luca and Jack all made the most of it. It was also great to have Daniel back on the ground, giving us a target deep. Play of the day saw Belly get on the end of a chain of handballs, kicking truly from 50m! A 5 goal to 2 second quarter gave us a halftime lead of 13 points, but the effort needed to be

maintained in the third against the wind. 5 goals to nothing was a result of poor concentration by us, frequently out numbered and out positioned at the contest. We were beaten in the air and on

the ground, unable to get our running game going, putting our backline under constant pressure. Tom, Belly, Nick Muz and Max all worked hard to nullify their opponents, and Aiden was strong on his wing. A big last quarter was required to erode the 20 point deficit, and despite utilising the wind to score 4 goals, Whittlesea

were able to score 4 of their own. We were exposed today by our lack of willingness to run both ways, communicate and set up around stoppages and compete in the air. If we are to be competitive next week against Yarrambat and survive an elimination final, we will need to do the basic things a lot better.

Yes we are limping to the line with plenty of injuries, but the 21 who will take the ground on Sunday are more than capable if we stick to what we have been practicing at training.

Good luck and go Panthers!

Cheers, Steve, Byron, Chris, Rob and Martine

WELL
DONE
STEVE K!

U17's and U18's girls match reports

Under 17's Eltham v Whittlesea

This week was the last game of junior football for the under 17 boys. The NFNL thought it best that we travel for a change, so we headed out to Whittlesea.

Now for those of you who haven't had the pleasure of driving to Whittlesea, let me paint you a picture.

Sunday in Eltham was a nice windless sunny winter's day. As we drove down Yan Yea Rd, past the Yarrambat Golf Course and then past the Yan Yean Reservoir, the road turned into a whole lot of bumps, holes, and roadkill. Something I am not accustomed to in leafy Eltham.

On the way we saw a theme park called Fun Fields. My first impression from this scribe is that it is a poor man's Luna Park. I mean what sort of theme park is closed on the weekend?!

As we got closer to Whittlesea, the country air kicked in and so did the country cliches. Cars were replaced with tractors on the road, we had to wait while the cattle crossed the road, and there was a Ma and Pa kitchen selling not espressos but black coffee with long life milk.

The ground itself, says it is located at the show grounds. I would say that is a slight exaggeration. The oval seemed to be a renovated greyhound track. In fact, you could still see the electric rabbit at one end of the ground. Anyway, back to the game.

With a finals spot assured, the boys still had to win the game, as second spot was still up for grabs if Monty could do us a favor and knock off Yarrambat. Spoiler alert, they didn't, so thanks for nothing Monty. Must be the black and white stripes they play in.

The "Show Ground" was blowing a gale. At one stage we saw Dorothy's house fly past with the wicked witch of the west chasing saying "I'll get you Dorothy and those shoes"

We kicked with that gale, and poor kicking saw us kick 3.6 to the munchkins 1 goal.

The second saw the munchkins kick poorly also kicking 1.7 to our 2 points to keep them in the game at half time.

At the half the Scarecrow thought hard and hard, made some moves, that saw the flying monkeys come out in the third and kick 3.2 while keeping the munchkins to a single goal.

The last quarter was a flurry, as the munchkins were running rings around the flying monkeys. At quarter's end, the flying monkeys came away with an 18-point win. Dorothy then flew back, clicked her heels three times and we were all back home a Central enjoying Family Night.

Congratulations to Xavier Mitchell and Lachie Finlay on playing 50 games.

Finals next week versus Montmorency at Mernda. Again, thanks NFNL!

Thank you to all the volunteers on Sunday.

Go panthers!

Scarecrow, Tin Man, and the Lion.

Under 18's Girls Eltham vs Montmorency

Playing Monty is the toughest gig in town at the moment; clear on top of the ladder, undefeated with a percentage of 435. This was an important test, how far had we come this season, how hard were we prepared to work for each other and what statement did we want to make about our season.

The game was largely played at one end, compliments of a strong wind, and Monty had first crack with it. This made the first qtr a tough one, but we kept them to two goals and we were playing good footy. Our turn with the breeze came and we controlled the ball in our half, peppering the goals but just couldn't kick a major.

The second half was a mirror of the first, and whilst we were competitive in every contest Monty just had a bit more polish, more experience and a bit more skill. The final score doesn't reflect how hard our girls cracked in or how competitive we were.

So what did we achieve today? Well our efforts kept us in 5th position on the ladder (just), that's something to be proud of.

We finished the season a lot stronger than we started it, including a fantastic week on the training track. We showed great respect to the five top age players playing their final junior game.

Like all teams we had finals aspirations at the start of the season, but if you only draw happiness from winning then you will be unhappy far too often. Finding joy in the doing is what keeps you coming back when the wins aren't coming, and our players found the joy in each other's company on and off the track and on game day. There is not a better group of girls in the league, you are a credit to yourselves and your families. Thanks to everyone who made the season a success; players, parents, volunteers, committee, snr women's team, coaches, the broader Eltham footy community.

Farewell to Amy, Ava, Ellie, Ingrid & Summer. It's been a privilege to be part of your journey to this point and we will watch on to see where it takes you next. Good luck!

See you all on the bus again next season, we are leaving earlier and going further!



Craig, Dave, Alannah & Jane..

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