

Editorial

Another bumper edition, and that's without all teams being able to play on the weekend!

Managers will be in touch in the very near future with the roster for canteen and bbq duties for Sundays. As the Club is also hosting the Independent Schools competition on Saturdays, bringing in valuable funds to help keep registration fees low, each team will be rostered on to a Saturday during the season. First up will be U9P, who will have canteen duties this Saturday, May 2nd.

U9 Purple

With such wet weather all week, the team was not sure if we were going to get a start. But with the club weaving some magic, we got a game at the International Sports Park, Blacktown. The surface was a little damp, but the ground was in top condition considering the previous twenty-four hours. Luca Z led the team this week, won the toss, and chose to run to toward the railway end of the ground.

We started this week from the moment the whistle blew, and controlled possession for most of the first quarter. Nick got in a

couple of good kicks early together with Will, and opened our account with a nice goal from Conner. There was great defence all round with good tackling ensuring several turnovers.

With everyone pumped from such a great start, we had plenty of good tap-outs from the centre. Daniel finished off one of these after several passes, and a controlled run down the field resulting in a convincing two arm salute, by our now permanent goal umpire for the season, Shane. Luca Z combined well in the forwards with several shots from team-mates down the field. Luca B took several clean marks in the third quarter ensuring we again dominated possession. Brodie kicked well this quarter and again tackling was a standout.

It was obvious Jarryd was gaining confidence with a superb mark in the fourth. Brayden followed through well with plenty of clear-outs. The final quarter was finished how we started with convincing goals again from Callum and Conner, and plenty of possession.

An impressive performance by all throughout the game, and very

promising beginning to the season considering it only our second start! Another enthusiastic wrap was given to the boys after the game by coaches Dave and Simon, with the team shouting out the club song once again.

– Mark Boyd

U9 White

After a very wet week, which saw record rain fall across Sydney, the U9 Whites were one of the lucky few teams in the competition to get on to the park. Prior to the match starting, the players, Umpires, Coaches, Managers and parents lined up to commemorate the ANZACs.

The bugle call was played, and the Ode was heard, and was followed by a minute's silence. Everyone respectfully participated in this and not a word was spoken by the boys which is particularly unusual given their penchant for discussing everything under the sun (or more accurately lack of it!) before the game, during the breaks, and after the games when the Coaches are providing pearls of wisdom...

The game got underway in cool, slippery conditions, however, both sides handled the ball extremely well with chasing and tackling a

feature of the Dockers boys. The Pennant Hills club is known to have developed a number of AFL players but for the second week in a row, the U9 Whites more than held their own against the Demons and would have won the four points if they existed. Our boys showed a high level of fitness by running out the game very strongly and putting in a true four-quarter display in tough conditions.

Highlights: Aarish showed good evasive skills on the forward line having 4 snap shots on goal (all points) including one that went over the top of the goal post. Charlie made his U9 Whites debut and showed several glimpses of brilliance that justified his selection including a couple of deft handpasses whilst being tackled.

Harrison played with poise and intercepted the ball a number of times repelling the Demons attacking play. Jack starred in the forward line and the backline and took a timely mark just millimetres in front of the Demons goal, foiling yet another scoring opportunity. Jeremy was speedy around the packs and crumbed the loose ball on several occasions, setting up team-mates in the process.

Kaelan improved upon last week

and impressed with his versatility and speed for a taller player. Leif (Plugger) used his size to great effect to provide a target all over the ground. Lincoln showed his ball sport versatility by trapping the footy a number of times without using his hands.

Nikolaj took off a number of times for that trademark dash up the ground and side step that we first witnessed last week. Ryan was a tackling machine, so much so that there was not enough room on the stats sheet to record his tackle count and he was outstanding on the forward line.

Sean was his usual busy self, playing as a key forward, defender or midfielder and at times completely dominated play. Thomas played his first game for season 2015 and generated drive through the mid field and defending stoutly when required. William did his best to impersonate the Incredible Hulk by busting through a group tackle whilst grunting so loud that he could be heard from North Ryde!

– Naushad Mistry

U10

The biggest question for most in the week running up to Sunday's

game against Pennant Hills Blue scheduled for Ern Holmes Oval in Pennant Hills was whether the game would go ahead or not. Reality set in nice and early on Sunday morning when devoid of any communication us Dockers set off for Pennant Hills. The game was slated for an 8am start and it was good to see that all the boys were there in plenty of time for a proper warm up and team talk before the official duties of the day got under way. Just before the start there was a fitting and moving ANZAC Ceremony which saw both teams, as well as Dockers 9 Whites and their opposition, standing respectfully to attention to a man.



The significance of the Ceremony was not lost on either set of opponents in the game as both sides went for everything from initial ball up to final hooter with a steely determination throughout

the full four quarters.

The Demons had the better of the initial exchanges on the scoreboard however there was no doubting the resolve of our Boys and a prime example was Zach who, despite a knock to the head and being trodden on in the ruck in our backline, was into every tackle and managing to wrap up the ball and stem the flow of possession and scoring opportunities for the opposition. Jacob and Matt were also tackling well in the centres and both boys managing to get away important kicks to our forward line who were hungry for the ball.

Liam and captain-for-the-day, Ned, were causing problems in the Demons defence and the recognition of the captaincy for prior training efforts seemed to spur Ned on and he bagged a worthy 6 pointer. He may also have been reinforcing the point to the coach who was giving Ned his first start in the forwards for some time rather than his customary fullback role. Message received loud and clear!

After some well earned hydration and words of encouragement from the coaching staff the second quarter was underway, with no let up whatsoever in the Dockers

tackling machine. Will and DJ took up the mantle in the centres and along with second gamer Jack the ball was wrapped up around the centre third for much of the quarter. Jack is getting more of the footy each week and his obvious enjoyment is infectious.

When the Demons did manage to get a supply into their forward line our other two second gamers, Luke and Charlie, combined well to limit any damage as well as winning some hard fought ball and clearing to the wings. Throughout the first half the boys applied constant pressure. Not one head dropped nor was one back turned which was an encouraging sign to the bench seeing as not 'standing the mark' had been identified as an area requiring major improvement from the teams first outing seven days prior.

More of the same was the message at halftime, and that's exactly what the crowd got for the next two quarters. In quarter three Penno piled on the pressure in their attacking third, however Jacko was the backbone of the defence with some resolute man on man marking, frustrating his opposite number, and clever clearances to Dockers advantage. Alistair shone bright in defence with an excellent

courageous mark which brought rousing applause from spectators, Dockers and Penno, combined. Liam stood tall in the midfield, while up front Will toiled relentlessly and laid tackle after tackle giving no quarter.

Entering the final quarter the boys were asked for one final ten minute effort and they didn't disappoint. Penno did manage to breach our defence a couple of times however it was more down to their footy skills and speed than any lack of determination on the parts of the combined defensive unit of Zach, Will, DJ and Jack.

The midfield third was a tacklezone with Jacob and Matt again to the fore and Alistair and Jacko picking out the leads of their forward teammates. Ned had a couple of long range attempts on goal and Liam, Luke and Charlie grafted tirelessly until the final hooter sounded.

After a rousing rendition of the Dockers club song Alistair was awarded the footy cards this week and you can be sure he will have plenty of competition come next Sunday.

A fitting game between two very competitive teams witnessed by a

crowd of spectators left wanting more, and it was only 9am. Time for coffee and breakfast.

It's worth mentioning that this Dockers under 10 team has now played only its second game together after an interrupted training pre season. There are five boys on the panel who are new to footy and enthusiastic for the game, and the backbone of the team is made up of the older boys from last year's U9 Whites and Purples. So as a team they are only in their infancy however they have shown Dockers spirit well beyond their years and the future is bright. See you all at training this week where focus will be placed on clearing the ruck and breaking the tackle successfully and kicking to advantage. Go Dockers!!

– Sean Cronin



U11

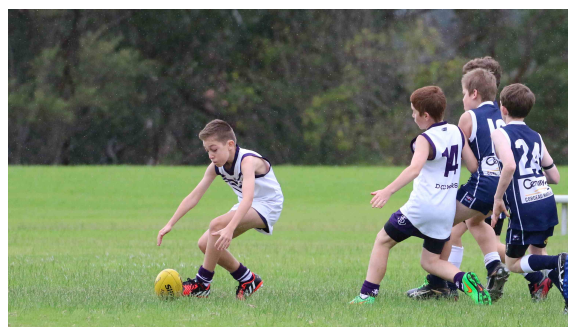
Round 2 was the opposite of Round 1. It was wet. Really wet... and cold! Sydney had copped all sorts of weather all week and with hail on Saturday afternoon most people thought the game would be cancelled. (Secretly I know some parents HOPED it would be cancelled). The boys had trained once indoors during the week as grounds all over Sydney were waterlogged. When there is a will there is a way and thanks to plenty of hard work and negotiation on Saturday, the clash against St Ives was relocated to Hornsby Heights at a slightly later time on Sunday morning.



In a testimony to the organisation skills of our manager Antony, all the boys were ready to go at the new time and at the new venue (Rofe Park) in the light rain and cool temperatures on Sunday. Just like the weather, the Dockers were a very different team to the previous week. From the opening

bounce they willed the ball forward, Josh stood tall in the forward line, received the free kick and calmly delivered the ball to Rhys F who slotted the first major. Back to the centre and it was almost like rewind but this time with Cameron, Henry, Lachy and Liam all getting involved.

St Ives didn't know what hit them. In wet, slippery and blustery conditions the Dockers were first to the ball and ferocious with their tackling. Hughie and Harrison combined across the half back line to ensure the ball remained in the forward half. Ryan used his height in the ruck to get first use of the ball for Ashton, Micah and Kyeton who all handled the slippery conditions beautifully.



The Dockers were so dominant across the middle that Coach Darren started rotating the defenders around to ensure they stayed warm. Tom responded well by bursting through the pack and slotting a beautiful goal on the run

and Luke proved last week's effort was no fluke with a couple of great goals. After a quiet first half in defence, Aiden, James and Rhys D relished their time up in the centre and up forward continuing the standard set from the opening bounce. It was like the storms earlier in the week – the Dockers were running like the wind and it was raining goals!

Despite the wet conditions the passing and marking were outstanding but perhaps the most impressive part of the game was the commitment and endeavour. If an opposition player did get the ball they were gang tackled instantly and there was always a player ready to receive the handball from a pack. The teamwork was brilliant with players working together and supporting each other all game.



Mitchell was outstanding with his commitment, tackling and his second efforts at the loose ball. Mattie G relished being in the centre and set the tone early with some solid shepherding. He laid countless tackles, earned plenty of kicks, and kicked a lovely goal to top it off! He earned the Footy Cards this week... and the nickname "Buster" for his tendency to bust through packs!

One of the most pleasing things was that although the Dockers were well ahead on the scoreboard and the result was decided by half time, they never eased off defended ferociously and finished the game as strongly as they started. Well done Dockers on a great 67 point win!

– Stephen Grech

U13

What a tough and slippery slog! The Dockers put up a courageous fight against a larger Manly team. After the week of relentless rain, both teams struggled to effectively move the ball. Many times the game resorted to soccering in mud and puddles, but the boys began to "pick up the ball" as the game progressed.

The slippery conditions demanded chest marks, and the standout Docker was Yianni, who saved at least 4 goals as our last line of defence, consistently and cleanly marking under pressure, and then looking for best options in well-directed clearances. He also drove hard at the ball and displayed fierce tackling. Joining the tackling slog fest were consistent strong efforts by Hugo and Nick, and the Brok “vice” tackle.

Tim, Riley, Jack and Nick fought hard in defence which was consistently under pressure, largely neutralizing the very tall Manly attack. Fynn, Lachlan, Dan and Cam countered the tall centres, and Adam, Blake and Harry tussled all day with the ball-gathering smalls. Despite the slippery ball, Blake displayed skilful kicking to leads, consistently provided by Fynn.

Cam returned for his first game of the season, quickly finding good form and providing a competitive target in the forward and centre. And well done Noah on his AFL Dockers debut! Our forwards had limited scoring opportunity, but they fought hard when the ball presented and Brok scored our 1 goal. Only 3 goals total for both sides sums up the conditions.

A big thanks to the U12s Dockers, their parents, manager and coaches for enthusiastic support, which allowed 18 players on the field. The U12s demonstrated that being a head shorter has no meaning in these conditions. They fought hard contested footy, repeatedly stopping their taller opposition, and all boys went home muddy as testament of their efforts!



The sloppy difficult conditions highlighted our need to improve the basic skill of “calling for the ball”, letting our teammates know where to kick or handball. We also need to provide more effective leads, and to more closely tag the opposition. Our stamina and ability to handle these wet conditions will improve during the season. Overall, a great effort by all the boys resulted in a highly competitive game.

– Charles Allan

U15

After the opposition forfeiting in Round 1, the U15s Round 2 match was a wash-out. Here's hoping the team can finally get a game in Round 3!

Acknowledgements

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