



Caulfield Bears Junior Football Club



Annual Report 2023

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President's Report

Overview

In my first season as President of the club I am so delighted to say that season 2023 has been one of great success and of great potential.

It is important to recognize and appreciate the contributions of volunteers, especially those who work tirelessly to support our children and the club. The CBJFC committee and sub-committee, as well as all the helpers who pitch in to assist the club with specific jobs, play a vital role in making the club a success. Their work is often behind the scenes, but it is essential to the smooth running of the club. This year our Secretary, Matt Dry was awarded the top admin accolade from the SMJFL – Administrator of the Year Award. A very well deserved achievement for a hard working CBJFC parent.

I would also like to thank all the wonderful volunteers in non-committee roles, such as coaches, team managers, umpires, medics, runners, photographers amongst many others. Footy is a sport where all families need to get involved which is part of the reason we love it so much; the community spirit is highest when we are all involved in some way. All these volunteer roles allow our kids to have a safe and enjoyable experience playing football and hopefully parents come away from the games with a sense of pride at being involved in this

too. This year one of our coaches was awarded the SMJFL Coach of the Year Award. This coach, Dan Marin is not a parent but a very hardworking volunteer who came across from the Senior Caulfield Bears. An amazing and well deserved award.

And lastly, to the players; congratulations on a great season. We had quite a few new members to our club this year and many merged teams – the friends that are made when playing sport together can be some of the best friends for life; so it was fantastic to see the CBJFC kids new and old coming together so well. There was also some absolutely fantastic individual success by our players, something that cannot be achieved without great teamwork around them.

Some huge team improvements which were seen in 2023 have meant that many parents have commented about how excited they are for 2024 and beyond. Great coaching, great camaraderie within a team and a great culture at the club enable this improvement as the kids all strive for success and enjoyment.



Highlights and statistics for the 2023 season:

- 279 player registrations were recorded across our 14 teams
- 48 girls
- 231 boys
- Co-Club Captains in Ged Saunders and Leona Clohesy
- 11 Mixed/Boys teams from U9's through to U17.5's
- 3 Girls teams from U14's to U16's Plus a large loaning of players to form an U18's girls team
- 6 teams made finals
- 3 teams made Grand Finals
- 1 League Premiership – U13 Mixed
- U14 Div1 League Best & Fairest Winner - Angus Brown
- U15 Div2 League Best & Fairest Equal Third place – Lucas Kennedy and Luke Mahimarajan
- U14 Div4 League Best & Fairest Runner Up – Milo Matthews
- U14 Div4 League Best & Fairest Third place – Isaac Feldman
- U13 Div5 League Best & Fairest Third place – Kenneth Brown
- U12 Div4 League Best & Fairest Runner Up – Elliot Mulholland Pyle
- U12 Div4 League Best & Fairest Third place – Owen Holm
- 2023 Interleague U14 MVP – Eammon Walker, U14 Runner Up MVP – Angus Brown
- 2023 SMJFL Coach of the Year – Daniel Marin
- 2023 SMJFL Administrator of the Year – Matt Dry
- Several Bears players participated in the Saints NGA training programs and Interleague and Intraleague Representative games
- Senior Bear of the Year Award – Derek Watters
- Junior Bear of the Year Award – Jack Curwood
- Seven x Boys awarded 10 Year Player awards and Four x Girls were awarded 7 Year player service awards
- 18 x umpires associated with CBJFC
- Auskick was a great success again on a Saturday thanks to Simon Rayner and on Friday night thanks to Luke Codarin.
- U7's successful lightning carnival with 15+ kids involved and plenty of parent helpers. The 2024 U8's are now well placed to hit the ground running.

The above show some great team and individual success and everyone should be very proud of these achievements. Success is definitely applauded and celebrated at CBJFC, but as too is team attitude and improvement. This brings me to our two Club Captains for 2023; Leona Clohesy and Ged Saunders. Not only were they great role models on field but they both helped out at our U10 team trainings and the Family Nights and got to know some of our junior players and set great examples to all the junior kids. Congratulations to Leona and Ged for a great 2023 season and for being great club representatives for your many years at CBJFC. A shout out also to Ash Margerison and Adam Scira who helped at U10's training as well. We will be encouraging this as much as possible next season and we hope that more older kids can squeeze in a session or three with the younger kids as it is beneficial and fun for all aged kids.

Registrations

Registrations were up at CBJFC compared to 2022. However unfortunately some age groups were not as high as others and we had to find homes for our U9 and U11 kids as we were unable to field full teams. We thank the parent group of these players who were open to this opportunity to ensure their kids continued to play footy. By the sounds of things the kids had fun seasons and we are grateful for Ormond and St Pauls McKinnon for welcoming them with open arms.

In 2023 we also built a strong relationship with StPauls McKinnon for our U10 and U14 girls teams. With so much choice of sports on offer to kids and with so many footy clubs close by the clubs decided that the best way to get the girls out on the ground was to unite together. This was a huge success and we have spoken of continuing this for seasons to come. We therefore encourage sisters, friends, cousins and classmates to come down and give girls footy a go – not only did the girls improve and have great success, but they also formed great new friendships.

A big thank you to our Club Registrar Alex Hopley who managed all our registrations in season 2023. Even when travelling overseas she still managed to make sure we got kids registered and out on the field that weekend.

Auskick

Auskick was a huge success at Koornang Park in 2023 with 80+ kids participating. We again ran Auskick sessions on Friday nights (led by Luke Codarin) and Saturday mornings (led by Simon Rayer). Thanks very much to Luke and Simon for your dedicated efforts in coordinating the sessions and teaching our future footy stars the skills of AFL. Also to all the parents out on the field coaching and assisting as well as those behind the scenes in the canteen and at the BBQ.

A big highlight of the Auskick season this year was the U7's Lightning Carnival run by the SMJFL. This was a great success as our kids and parents get ready for the U8 season ahead of them. It was great to see 15+ kids in Bears gear snapping goals, giving great Bear Hug tackles and showing off their Auskick skills in game conditions. They are well and truly ready for 2024!

Social Engagement

In 2023 we had 4 Bear Cave family functions, a parents Trivia night, and a Volunteers/Sponsors function. In 2023 we trialed holding one of the Family Nights on a Friday evening after Auskick and U8/U10 trainings session were finished. This was a great success and brought together a group of parents and kids that may not have previously attended our Sunday Family Nights. We plan to hold

more Friday night events into 2024. Thanks to all parents for making these events run smoothly, especially to Dan Clohesy for grabbing the mic and entertaining us all as MC.

With regards to our presence on social media – once again it was a great year thanks to Christina Pappasavvas' posts on Instagram and Facebook, as well as a huge thanks to our team of photographers. With over 1,200 followers on Instagram and over 800 on Facebook; this is by far our best means of communication, celebration and sharing of the wonderful achievements of the kids on field as well as a great way to shout out to our sponsors.

Sponsorship

Without sponsorship, fees for junior sports would mean a huge drop in kids playing junior sports. For this reason we are so very appreciative of our loyal group of sponsors, some who have been with us for many seasons and some who have recently just joined. You are all important to us and we hope we give back to you too for our mutual benefit.

I would like to mention and thank the following loyal sponsors for financially supporting the CBJFC in 2023:

- Gary Peer
- The Bank
- @ The Catch
- TMS – Track Manage Support
- JBA Physio
- Prosthétique Dental
- Hot Bird
- Pizza Religion
- GPK
- Bakers Delight

For any businesses that wish to become a CBJFC sponsor in 2024, we look forward to welcoming you to our Club. Our sponsor packages have just recently been updated for the 2024 season and we believe sponsorship can be a very mutually beneficial arrangement. If you live in the suburbs surrounding Koornang Park then you cannot possibly miss the amount of Bears training tops with sponsor logos being worn by the kids over the weekends. The walking billboards are just one part of sponsorship which the club can offer. Please reach out if you wish to discuss being involved in sponsoring over the 2024 season.

Conclusion

CBJFC is run by a large number of volunteers who help with a variety of tasks to ensure the kids can play fun, safe and competitive football every year. I would like to thank everyone on the Committee and Sub-Committee as well as the numerous volunteers for all your help in 2023. We are farewelling a few huge contributors to our club from their official committee positions and we would like to acknowledge these amazing people:

- Scott Millar (Child Safety Officer)
- Nikki Hogan (Merchandise)
- Nicole Sternbergs (TM Coordinator, Jersey coordinator)
- Alex Hopley (Registrar)
- Peter Bremner (Vice President)

So whilst these amazing volunteers are moving on, new parents have put their hands up and we look forward to hearing from anyone else who has some capacity (small or large) to help out behind the scenes in 2024.

And my final words for 2023; Junior footy is a great way for kids to achieve personal and team success, and to form lasting friendships. At CBJFC, we value skill development, camaraderie, sportsmanship, and fun, and we hope that this combination leads to success on the field. We look forward to seeing you all again in 2024!

Go Bears!



Football Operations Report

After the most successful season in Bears history, expectations were high for season 2023. Many teams were keen to get started, with preseason training for many teams starting in January (and in one notable case, in November!). The positive results from last year meant that for some of the older age groups we had good numbers of registrations, and the impact of a strong Auskick feeder program meant we had a ready-made full team of Under 8s raring to go. Unfortunately, the Covid interrupted 2020 and 2021 season have really put a hole in player numbers from the cohort that would have started club footy in those years, presenting a challenge to the Club to try and field teams in the younger age ranges. A fruitful relationship with St Paul's McKinnon in the promotion of girls footy has led to two merged girls teams and the potential for more in future, which is a very positive development. And our successful association with St Kilda City in the Under 16 boys continued, and expanded to help our U17 boys and U18 girls compete in season 2023.

Once again, a strong cohort of experienced coaches stepped up to the plate, including Sam taking the reins of the Under 8s for their first year. Thank you to Sam, Dave, Troy, Josh, Tony, Marcus, Adam, Willisy, Al, Dan and Matt for putting in the hard work with their respective teams, and for dealing with the terrible coaching accreditation process this year. I personally thank them all for their patience and accommodation during some trickier balancing acts with training times and equipment.

A particular shout-out goes to Dan Marin, who was selected as the SMJFL Coach of the Year for his hard work with the Under 16 Girls. The award was a well-deserved reward for his efforts with the team over many seasons.

In the second full season with our upgraded clubrooms, logistics were much smoother this year. A full season with working lights certainly helped! One of the goals of the Football Operations department is trying to ensure we have enough training footballs for one per player. Getting footballs in every player's hands is a key to their skill development. It's an ongoing struggle to maintain that level of equipment as balls go missing over fences or to other mystery locations (it feels like there must be a giant pile of lost footballs somewhere), but the Club will continue in this aim.

While the Bears struggled to repeat the successes of last season, we still punched well above our weight in finals, with the majority of our eligible teams making the knockout phase. Huge congratulations to Josh and the Under 13 Mixed team for coming away with the flag (continuing a fine tradition of Bears Under 13 Premierships - no pressure, Troy!). To see a team who were struggling to win a game two years ago get turned around to a Grand Final appearance, followed by a flag, is something the team should really be proud of. Well done Josh and your team.

I would like to thank all of the volunteers who make sure the kids get a game each Sunday (or Tuesday, or Thursday, or Friday...). I often speak to parents of kids playing other sports, and I don't think anything else requires the huge range of volunteer roles that footy does. So thank you to the Trainers, Coaches, Assistant Coaches, Runners, Water Carriers, Timekeepers, Team Managers, Boundary and Goal Umpires!

Derek Waters

Team Reports

Under 8s

The Under 8's season was a ripping year for both kids and parents. At the start of the year, we didn't really know what we were up for, except that we got to play real matches, with real umpires against some very good teams. We also knew that we needed to fill 18 spots which had us scratching our heads.

A meeting was convened at The Bank, which is a great sponsor of ours, and Kelly Wheeler took on the Team managers role and I the coach. I was amazed at how positive Kelly was in the belief that we could make this work. She went about creating a database, and engaging all the kids and families that we could. Kelly made it clear that we are to make people feel welcome, not just the footballers, but the mums, dads, grandparents, brothers, and sisters.

And as the summer progressed with a very solid preseason, there was light at the end of the tunnel that we were going to get a team, even if we thought we might struggle to be competitive

We started with some very seasoned and tough players who had done their apprenticeship through AusKick. Kids like:

- Angus the mad tackler
- Will Erickson the big bear in the square
- Sammy Bower was developing all the time and had a killer instinct, and Patrick had the ability to get in and under the packs with class.
- Lachie Dunbar in the midfield had strength and skill.
- the class of little Henry and the poise of big Henry
- The determination of Eden
- The courage of Damo and the polish and finish of his twin brother Xavier
- We had the pace of Liam, and there was something special about the silky skills of Vinnie O'Kane that we hoped would come to fruition.
- Armaan the proud bulldog was a lock for being the man, and there was a kid called Oscar who had sparked up when the ball was there to be won.
- Rhiaan was there at his side.

But we needed more players, great players, courageous players. And one by one they arrived, full of courage, hope, and vulnerability.

In came Hayden, rising star and very fast. Paddy Jeans and Alex, both recruited with a hand scribbled letter, and boy these kids could play!

Abel rolled up and saw the ball and kicked it without fear, tough as a cat's head.

There was a kid called Will Needles who was first on the track, had a nice left boot, but didn't know if he could play...well he was a ball magnet!

Zac came in as a tough midfielder who could run like a chariot. And all the way from Queensland came a rising star in Hudson, courageous and loved being with his new mates.

And this other kid came who ran with the ball so fast the other kids didn't want to go near him, what an inclusion you were Darsh.

Bang, we had a team...great team on paper, but we needed to learn how to play together. We had to learn how to lose and how to win. Our first game was a very hard day, losing easily and we were all very emotional. Would have been easy for kids and parents to walk away. 2nd game wasn't much better. Luckily, we had Dale Bower in the coaching team. He made it clear that it's ok not to win, but if we keep training and trying, who knows what can happen? And sure enough, we had great numbers at training, and we trained with tough practice matches and then it all started to click.



Every Friday night the kids committed, but as importantly, the parents were on the oval too to help. Andrew Harrop was always out there helping set up and do what was required. So too would Anthony, Brendon, Stu Hall who did a fantastic job umpiring, I still recall your enthusiasm when we won the first match by a point and apologies for any grief I sent your way, Brennan, James Martin who would always jump the fence to join in, Jono with his technical support, Luke Davis, Andrew Erickson. Always there to lend a hand, Dale and I would never have been able to get through a training session without your constant support.

And throughout the week and on game day, there was a constant stream of work, led by Kelly. Most got roped into a job, my favourite I must admit was Eric singing the song. Bec for running the club while Kelly was away, Anthony, Neeraj, Needles, Jono doing the running, James Martin doing the goal umpiring, along with Rob Chivers, Radion doing the snakes/oranges.

Danae, Soraya, Sanaa, doing the time keeping. Jo Jeans for running the best fish and chips side business in town. Fiona the cards. And for many others including our family, just being able to get to the ground whilst chasing other kids was a massive effort.

We had inspirational halftime quips from Jono O’Kane when required whilst the kids scoffed their lollies.

It was great to look back at the photos from Brennan (and Jenn!) that we could reflect on whilst having our Sunday lunch. So much selfless work, done for the love of our kids.

Last but not least, we had the freest flowing match reports that summed the mood of all. Zoe O’Kane encapsulated the mood in her reports, the feeling of being grateful and proud that we were able to watch our kids do their best and in doing so make some wonderful friends that will always be connected through the mighty Caulfield Bears.

Bring on 2024!

Sam Dunbar



Under 10 Mixed

The U10s entered their final year of modified rules with enormous energy and enthusiasm. Having been hard hit by the pandemic the previous few years - with many kids effectively playing across two teams - this was the first year we had a settled squad and expectations were high.

The goals for the year were very simple. Develop our skills and game knowledge, develop our brand, and never lose sight of the fact that it must be fun. It was also critical that the kids were exposed to a little more physical contact so that the jump from modified rules to “real” footy next season would not be too big a jump.

Having played in Division 6 and Division 7 last season, we were very competitive in most of our grading games. Despite often having far fewer scoring shots we were keen to step up to a higher grade. They say be careful what you wish for – by the end of the grading games we would find ourselves in the highest Division. As much as we like to embrace a challenge this was probably too big a year-on-year leap. After expressing this to the league we then found ourselves back in the lowest Division. From one extreme to the other. Fortunately, with the support of the Committee and a like-minded coach at Cheltenham JFC – a direct Division swap was made between the two clubs, and we finally settled into Division 4 where we were competitive for the rest of the season.

The first goal was to continue to develop our skills and our game knowledge. In previous years the boys were rotated through different positions every half – but now it was time for a more settled approach. I really want to thank not only the kids, but also the parents for embracing this change. Their trust in this philosophy undoubtedly enabled us to fast track the boys' understanding of structures, ball movement and teamwork. It was amazing to see how all the boys' skills developed over the season with training drills becoming more complex throughout the year. It was also clear to all that not only were skills improving but our style of play that we were practising at training was being reflected in games. Having learned how to spread like “butter chicken” last year, we introduced “QLD” – quick, long, and direct. Watching the ball move from one end of the ground to another, with link up hand balls and long kicks made Sunday mornings a pleasure to watch no matter what the result. We also learned the importance of teamwork with goal assists being recognised as every bit as important as the goals themselves – enabling the work done by the back six and midfielders in getting the ball to the forwards to be rewarded.

Another goal was to develop our brand – our trademark. What sort of “team” did we want to be? How did we want to treat each other and our opponents? There are so many opportunities that present themselves in sport no matter what level or age you are at. This season we learned through training and gameday experiences an understating of duty of care and respect. We learned how to be great teammates and great sports – win or lose. It would be fair to say that in most of the games we played we were relatively undersized, however this never phased us, and we learned how to be brave and resilient with our attack on the ball and our tackling a highlight of the year. By season's end our trademark had been

built through actions and deeds. We are “fair, courageous, and relentless”. As cliché as it reads – it really isn’t about winning or losing – it’s how you play the game. I am extremely proud of the way the kids learned to look out for each other – and the respect they showed not only to myself but to the umpires and opponents alike.

I am also super grateful to our parent group. Having lost the finest team manager in the league as Kerry stepped up to be President of the club, Joy came in and did an awesome job as TM. Supported by Nicole and an entourage of parents the envy of the competition, everyone put their hands up whenever asked - roles and responsibilities were spread across the whole team. Trainers, timekeepers, runners, water carriers – we always had it covered. I would also especially like to thank

Shol, Simon, and Freddie for taking on the umpiring roles each week. You guys were elite and represented the team and its values perfectly. Finally, a special shout out to Coach Luke for his assistance - the more we see you the better! Looking forward to continuing our partnership next year.

The season began with high expectations and clearly defined goals. I feel I can speak for all involved and say that it ended up being everything we’d hoped for and more. As an U10s coach, the ultimate measure of success was how much fun did the kids have while developing as not only football players, but as young boys? Well - we had a blast!

Goodbye modified rules - this team is ready to roar in 2024. Let’s gooooooooooooo!



Under 10 Girls

The CBJFC under 10 girls merged with St Paul's McKinnon in 2023 to form the "Puppy Bears". 16 girls came together and had fun, learnt some impressive footy skills and most importantly became friends. Some had never played before, girls from The Bears had been in mixed teams with boys and felt they wanted more of the ball and others had been in a small McKinnon team that had struggled for players the season before. They were enthusiastically coached by Suzanne Commerford and Dan Clohesy and there was always an army of parents happy to help out at training and on game day and support the team every week. The Puppy Bears were very successful winning many games over the season and the calibre of footy improved significantly as did the team "woof woof gr" chant. We were having so much fun more girls joined over the course of the season and we hope many more will join us next season. This was a successful merger with another family minded club that we are aiming to continue in 2024. We thank St Pauls for making us feel so welcome and we cannot wait for another year of girls footy.



Under 12 Mixed

Off the back of a successful 2022 season the team was keen to get the 2023 season under way. A couple of fresh recruits over the off season meant the team was well positioned for a shift into Div 4.

With some early big wins the focus was on continuing to play as a team and not being selfish. It was about being Disciplined with how we treated the opposition during and after the game after having a big win.

We applied the theme of Discipline to many circumstances throughout the season. It developed into something the Team really understood and connected with.

As the season progressed new challenges emerged but still the theme of Discipline was there. It helped keep the team focussed and not get distracted. We let our football do the talking. It worked.

While we had one loss before getting to finals, not everything went our way in every game. We had to fight our way back from some pretty difficult positions. Again Discipline came into it. Keep focussed. Play it quarter by quarter.

I'm really proud of how the Team conducted themselves through the season. They respected the umpires. They were enthusiastic at training. Wanting to learn and improve. Discussing and putting forward ideas. Were supportive of their team mates on and off the field. They welcomed new players into the team or at training. This is a real credit to the group as individuals and as a Team.

In the end we didn't end up with a Grand Final win, but no one could ever say the team didn't put in its all and give it everything on that day.

There were sixteen games before that which made up an amazing season of hard fought wins, many moments of brilliance and lots of fun.

We are very fortunate to have a really supportive and engaged parent group who are willing to help out at training, on game day, at the Club and on the Committee. Specific thank yous to Andrew H (Assistant Coach), Chandra (Team Manager), Phil T (Runner), Andrew W, Jen W and Michael G (Trainers), Emily (unofficial team photographer), James B (banners and trophies across all teams), Peter B (Vice President), Karen M (Incident Officer).

2023 is a season the Team can be really proud of.

Troy Fryar

Awards

Best and Fairest Player

Elliot Mulholland Pyle

Runner-up Best and Fairest Player

Owen Holm

3rd Best and Fairest Player

Oscar Bremner

Most improved

Daniel Theuma

Best Team Player

Rocco Fevola

Rising Star

Archie Palmer



Under 13 Mixed

“Unfinished Business”



After a very successful 2022 season, the U13 Bears were left with a bitter taste in their mouths over the off season following a loss in the Grand Final. Ken Brown’s dad, Tony said we had ‘unfinished business’ in February this year and we rolled with that title for the 2023 season.

Many Bears returned to preseason training in early February and with the boom recruits of Liem, Nick and Oscar B, plus the return of the mighty Archie from WA, we started the season with high enthusiasm and hopes. Improved fitness and skills over many tough weeks of training meant we were ready to hit the ground running in Round 1.

Our 4 grading games showed promise with some resounding wins over Oakleigh and Bentleigh, but it was Prahran that would prove to become our rivals this year, losing 11 to 44. It was then we knew we had a lot more work to do.

As the season proper started, we went on a 6 game win streak before we again met our undefeated rivals in round 7 at the MCG like Como Park. Undermanned and playing short for half the game, the Bears gave it their all. But in an all too familiar story for this pack of Bears, there were many missed goals before Jack finally snapped truly from the boundary to get our first major. In a big change or roll, Matthew had been moved to fullback and this proved to be a master stroke as he dominated from this point forward. With scores level in the dying seconds, the Bears were headed for heartbreak after a free kick was awarded to Prahran as the siren went. Luckily the shot missed and the Bears got the draw. However a 3.13.31 to 4.7.31 scoreboard showed us that with straight kicking we could match it with anyone.

After rotating captains throughout the season, we decided to give the players their own voice as they voted for captains to lead us to the end of the year and through the finals. Darcy and Ken were named co-captains and Delilah, Jermaine and Matthew as co-vice captains. Their amazing leadership capabilities would be required right until the final seconds of the season.

The return of Jermaine towards the end of the season gave us the most potent forward line we'd assembled. Delilah, Cooper and Jermaine dominated games at the half forward line, Jack was unstoppable at full forward, while our small forwards of Levi, Ollie P, Ben, Jagger and Ollie Y were super reliable.

As the finals were approaching, it was an unexpected loss to St.Kilda City / Port that gave the Bears a wake up call. As we played our final home and away game of the season, it was a 110 to 0 crushing victory over Oakleigh that showed the Bears were finding their best form at the most crucial time of year.

We headed to the preliminary final against Hampton full of confidence. Liem was dominant in the ruck, and with set plays from stoppages it would be Darcy, Oscar D and Ken that would tear games apart from the opening bounce. Given the huge task of tagging their centre half forward, Johnny saved his best performance for the finals and nullified his opponent. Teva comfortably fit into his new role in the backline and didn't give his opponent an inch, repelling attack after attack from Hampton. When Jack found Levi who pumped the sealer through the big sticks in the final quarter, we knew we were headed back to the big dance.

The grand final lived up to all expectations. A hot and late afternoon game against our rivals, Prahran. With just 22 players on our list, it was fantastic to have all available and playing in the game. Prahran jumped out of the gates with the wind and had a 3 goal lead at quarter time. The Bears tried their best in the 2nd and Delilah marked strongly and converted before Nick kicked another monster from the wing and as we headed for the rooms at the big break it was 13 points the difference.

The Bears dominated the premierships quarter, but again didn't kick truly with missed opportunities in front of goal, but had fought back to be only 2 points behind. Our half backs

of Seb, Johnny and Archie had lifted and weren't giving an inch while Ollie Y and Oscar B were chasing down loose balls like their lives depended on it!

The 4th quarter started with a goal from Baden and the Bears could smell victory as they got in front. The final 13 minutes saw an epic clash between the two rivals, neither giving an inch. The last 4 minutes had the ball bouncing around the Prahran forward 50, but the bears were desperate and the cool heads of Darcy, Ken and Nick made great decisions to keep the bears' slender lead. As the final siren went, it was Alex who emerged from the bottom of the pack with the ball, receiving a free kick and jumping for joy as the celebrations began.

The tears flowed from players, coaches, spectators and more.

The pain of not winning a game for three years, followed by a Grand Final loss last year made this premiership all the more sweeter.

A huge thanks to all the parents for their continued support over the last two seasons. Especially our team managers Adam and Tony, runners David and Scott and team trainer Matt.

A special mention to our assistant coach, Greg, who's been with the team since their AusKick days. It's been a long road to a premiership and without Greg's guidance, advice, support and encouragement this flag wouldn't belong to the Bears.

Josh Acklom

Awards

Best and Fairest Player

Darcy Stewart

Runner-up Best and Fairest Player

Ken Brown

3rd Best and Fairest Player

Oscar Dickens

4th Best and Fairest Player

Matthew Fardell

5th Best and Fairest Player

Liem Nguyen

6th Best and Fairest Player (Tied)

Alex Ratner & Nick Pipingas

Under 14 Girls

With low registrations for a second year, another merger was arranged, this time with St Paul's McKinnon. The girls were led by senior coach Bianka Tsan, who played juniors at the same club, and continues in the women's team.

The group quickly bonded, but with the numbers still low, we knew it would be a challenging season. Playing in division two, our first win came in round 4 over Cheltenham, who were no match for the Bears even though they could play with two extra players on the ground and three on the bench. Some very tough games followed, including one with five U12s filling in. However, our girls were resilient throughout the season, and always played their best without giving up.

Training sessions focussed on improving kicking, moving the ball through handballs, and strong tackling. Footy Volleyball became quite popular with the team, as were many of the competitive drills and games.

In the latter part of the season, the team was bolstered by some new recruits. This led to a euphoric four point upset win over grand finalists St Kilda City, and a huge win over Prahran. After the final round, the team unfortunately missed out on finals by only half a game.

Having to overcome many obstacles throughout the season, it was especially enjoyable to see the development of the girls over that time, making me very proud.

Thanks to Bianka for coaching the team this year, you were a great inspiration to the girls, and were almost like a big sister to them. Also, thanks to all the parents who helped out on match day during the season, especially to Cappi Ireland and her impeccable co-ordination as Team Manager, and to Rob Loft as a very knowledgeable Team Runner.

Finally, thanks to St Paul's McKinnon for being such a great partner club. Should the opportunity arise to merge again, there would not be any hesitation.

Marcus van Lint

Awards

Best and Fairest Player

Sydney Dalton

Runner-up Best and Fairest Player

Mia Euvrard

3rd Best and Fairest Player

Matilda Loft

4th Best and Fairest Player

Cullan Barnacle

Most Improved

Zoe Ovadia

Coaches Award

Sienna Aloï

Under 14 Mixed Div 1

The Under 14s started out 2023 with a lot of enthusiasm and an influx of new players. From scraping around for enough numbers to field two teams in 2022, this year presented the opposite problem as we had to close Under 14 registrations to avoid rostering players off!

The new players (and parents) quickly fit into the “Bears culture”, as a strong preseason prepared the team for the move to Division 1. The group had its customary slow start to the season, with a disappointing loss to a fired-up Prahran keen to avenge their grand final loss from last season. Grading games against the strongest Div 1 teams made it look like a long, difficult season ahead. As the team’s new players started to gel, though, the performances improved, and the results started to show.

In Round 4, the Bears got their first win over a Div 1 side in East Malvern. A long stint of playing games on Koornang Park (seven in a row!) helped us establish our home “fortress” as wins against Prahran, St Kilda and Mordi-Brae followed.

As the finals approached, the parents (and a few of the kids) dared to dream - could the Bears sneak into the top four in their first season in Div 1? Two critical games defined the season. On a cold, drizzly, miserable afternoon at a South Melbourne oval without shelter, facilities or even a seat, the Bears held on by three points, with some matchwinning defensive stops in a frantic last quarter. Two weeks later, this time in the dry on the expansive oval at East Malvern, the Bears again held on against the Knights in a desperate finish in a game which would determine who finished fourth on the ladder. The Bears had done it!

Sadly, the League then had something to say about it, reconfiguring the finals to a top five, but the team should be proud of having earned a finals spot regardless of the logistics. The Bears had their first ever game under lights in the first final, defeating South Melbourne. Unfortunately, the Hampton Rovers were too strong in the second final, bringing the Bears’ season to an end, but with pride, not disappointment. Every match the team played, they improved over the course of the season, reflected in the results of every match. The coaches, volunteers and parents could not be prouder of the effort the boys put in all season.

Right from the start, our miserly backline really stuck together, held together by the spine of Max, Noah and Cade with Stasi, Jock, Quinn and Alex in support driving the ball upfield. Up forward, led by Adam’s vocal encouragement, Andrew, Conor, Harry, Reece, Archer, Kingsley and Josh S presented options and applied pressure to keep the ball in our attacking half. The versatility of players like Asher, Braden and Luca who could play forward or back made the coaches job easier, allowing us to tweak the team balance on any given day. Our midfield guns Angus B, Eamonn and Erik continued to excel, with huge improvement from our wings Josh G and Dimma. And the development (and addition) of key ruck resources, Angus W, Zac and Archie helped us get first use of the ball and really improved our clearance rate.

From me personally, a huge thank you to Greg for stepping up to sling magnets as Assistant Coach - rotations not having been something we had to deal with for many years! James was invaluable as just-on-the-edge-of-breaking-the-rules-about-onfield-coaching vocal runner, but also as a Development Coach for the whole Under 14 group. Once again Gav and Tash made things too easy for the rest of us as Team Management. Thanks to all the parents who volunteered as Trainer, Goal and Boundary Umpires, Timekeepers, Umpire Escorts and Water Carriers.

The expectation is set now - let's aim for a Div 1 flag in 2024!

Derek Waters

Awards

Best and Fairest Player

Angus Brown

Runner-up Best and Fairest Player

Eamonn Walker

3rd Best and Fairest Player

Josh Godfrey

Most Improved

Archie Johnstone

Most Courageous

Alex Bridges

Coaches Award

Adam Arbaitman



Under 14 Mixed Div 4

What a year of recruitment, 12 new (including a few who had never played in a team before) or returning so half the side! How was the season going to go!!

Good numbers for preseason starting mid Jan, the practice match was a challenge as we were lucky to score against Port Saints, we had some talent but putting together the boys to work and play as a team was going to be a challenge.

1st week of season we face South Melb Districts in what turned out to be a tremendous heart stopping win away which really did kick the start of the season and set the tone for heart stopping games. A few of those new recruits looked ok as well, signs were promising. We found a strong marking leading forward target in Zac, a beast like ball extractor and accumulator in Milo, with a run all day ruckman in Remy and an attacking full back in Henry to name a few.

A couple of big losses before grading came along and we were one of 7 teams in Div 4, a level up from 2022 Div 5 in 2022.

The 1st few games after grading we were quite solid with a couple of tight wins and a loss notwithstanding some lack of discipline at training. One of the measures to counter this which had some risk to it was putting responsibility back on the players. One win which became a highlight of a player led performance was in the extremely wet conditions at Murrumbeena where we were hard at the ball and really started to gel. During that game our backline led by Oscar, Will Taylor, Hamish and Jacko were impassable.

The holiday season games weren't kind to us as we recorded a few losses in a row and notwithstanding we were sitting with a very strong % we were in some danger of missing finals.

Then came the turnaround, appointing captain Cooper was one of the reasons for this, along great team performances we finish the season 3 rd on the ladder.

Finals came with much anticipation, playing Hampton Rovers who had beaten us once and probably should have beaten us twice. The starts to our game were an important indicator of our performances and we struggled with these at times during the season. But not today, lots of players contributing, we looked very strong up forward with Zac, Harley and Buzz getting into really good positions and kicking goals and strong through the centre with Milo, Seb and Issam taking control of the centre clearances and Will Stacey providing great run down the wing and half forward. In what was the highlight of the season with a strong team performance we win easily. It got tougher in the prelim final as we didn't have enough height and strength to match it with Beaumaris but it wasn't for lack of effort.

Well done boys in what was a truly memorable performance, some of the kids hadn't got anywhere near playing near the top or in finals in the 5 years of my coaching so I was

immensely proud of what was produced notwithstanding we still had a little way to go against the top 2 teams. The kids had a ball and we just got better. Lets gets as many down there as possible in 2024 and make it our year as the more we play together the better we will get. The best teams in sport are those that stay together the longest.

Off the field which thankfully was once again planned controlled and executed through our wonderful Nikki and Sammi who stepped in to shoulder the load when Nikkis health was an issue in the last month of the season. Trainers Lou, Dave Stacey & Toni were brilliant in a season where injuries were a bigger factor than in previous. My team led by Aaron who provided the inspiration to the biggest changes we made on and off the field were great, Buzz with his wit and wisdom and David Birch for his training day assistance.

Lastly, congratulations to 2 of our boys in Milo and Zac who finished second and third in the League B&F.

Lets go 2024 and make it ours

Tony Hogan

Awards

Best and Fairest Player
Milo Matthews

Runner-up Best and Fairest Player
Oscar Hermann

3rd Best and Fairest Player (Tied)
Harley Benton and Will Taylor

Best Clubman
Cooper Warburton

Most Improved
Charlie Burrage

Best First Year Player
Zac Feldman



Under 15 Boys

After coming off a flag in 2022, it was going to be a huge challenge for the boys in Div 2 as only 5 teams in Div 1 and 5 in Div 2. As a team we were very lucky to welcome a number of new faces to the team, a huge welcome to Lyon, Lincoln, Jessie, Xavier (Chep) and Oli (Cozza). It was also great to welcome back Isiah and Grady to the club.

The season started in magnificent fashion with a 15+ goal win over the Waverly Park Hawks who we beat in the 2022 granny by a few points, it was evident very early in pre season that we were much improved and this result proved that. Post grading every single game was tough and very hard fought and the boys never gave up and continued to improve every single week. As we got to play most teams 3 times we were able to see our improvement and every week besides a few blips we improved significantly. We improved so much during the year we managed to secure a finals berth after two massive wins in the final two weeks of the season over the Tigers and Ajax.

Final 1 we played Ajax on their home deck and brought amazing effort, tenacity and skill and after 4 very tough quarters we were lucky enough to have a hard fought win. In the prelim we got off to a flyer against a Port Melbourne / South Melbourne team who had beaten us twice in the regular season but they gradually wore us down and got over the line by a few goals.

We finished the season as the 8th ranked team in the SMJFL Under 15's and the highest ranked single team club, every other team above us had at least two teams.

Each and every boy should be congratulated on a huge and successful year and a special congratulations to our three captains who topped our top 3 places in the BnF being Lucas K 1st, Luke M 2nd and Cooper a 3rd.

Adam Conrad

Awards

Best and Fairest Player

Lucas Kennedy

Runner-up Best and Fairest Player

Luke Mahimarajan

3rd Best and Fairest Player

Cooper Acklom

Most Improved

Samuel Davies

Coaches Award

Oliver Corrie

Best Team Player

Sheldon Quirin

Under 16 Girls

BEARS ARE COMING!

Another early start to pre-season like the previous year with emphasis on running/fitness, we had about five or six 1km time trials – with girls showing massive improvement, the 380 punishments. Onto our start of season, we lost a total of 4 players (mainly midfielders) over the break but the great thing is we managed to recruit 3. Our first 4 rounds of grading were tough! We moved the magnets and tried to find the right chemistry in the midfield, backline and forward line. We had some really good passages during our grading rounds even though the scoreboard reflected otherwise. The message after grading rounds was to remain positive and to keep working hard at training.

After moving magnets for the first 4 rounds – we finally had our team set in positions. The Girls really took on the challenge! The growth in the space of 3 or 4 week period was really significant. We started the proper season a little slow but always improved and it wasn't really until we had our draw against Cheltenham in Round 8 where we managed to come back and kick 3 goals 6 behinds in the last quarter where the girls finally realised their full potential. We managed 6 straight wins after that game which secured us 2nd place and a double chance. Throughout the year training numbers were high and standard lifted. Finals for a second consecutive year running with this special group of girls, very nervous in our Qualifying Final, unfortunately fell short. Prelim final we were on from the get go! The girls were determined to make up for the week prior... 1 point victory and into the Grand Final. We unfortunately fell short by 3 points in the Grand Final - Dominated the second half of the game and just fell short. One very proud coach!

We have had so much individual growth this year, new rucks, new mids, new backs and new forwards... This year has given us great flexibility with girls gaining experiences in positions they normally wouldn't play. Looking forward to next season to see the girls continued growth. We are going to have two 100 game players next season and the majority playing over 50.

Special mention to my captain Sienna – One tough Girl, playing finals with fractured finger & also leg soreness. Also special mention to my leadership group, Matt and John for assistance at training. To all the parents for the endless support.

To the Girls returning next year - Start running! :)

Awards

Best and Fairest Player

Sienna Cipriani

Runner-up Best and Fairest Player

Lily McDonald

3rd Best and Fairest Player

Grace McIntyre

Team Player of the Year

Maya Jorgenson

Most Improved

Catia Bodasso

Coaches Award

Camille Demathieu



Under 16 Boys Div 1

We entered the 2023 season with a healthy 49 players across the U16 cohort – with an influx of East Malvern players following the folding of their U16 team.

However with 31 of the list also representing APS schools – the ongoing management of players preparing for 2 x games each weekend at the physical U16 level, resulted in many weeks of no interchange and additional pressure on those playing to manage 8 x qtrs of football over a weekend.

Despite the U16 Div 1 team concluding the year at the bottom of the 6 strong U16 division, we were the only team to secure some points (a draw mid year) from the eventual premiers St Bedes – who failed to lose a game all season. One win and 5 losses by under 10 pts represented an extremely competitive season and one that the playing group should be proud of. Many lessons are learnt from losses versus dominating Div2 – which was the alternative at the start of the season.

Personally, would like to thank Simon Williams (Asst Coach), Shane Walsh (runner) and our regular trainer cohort (Donna Paatsch, Ange McLeod and occasional Damien Murrhly) for their unwavering support at training, match day and in the prep to field a team each week. The broader parent group were always present and despite the team results, fronted each week and supported the players magnificently.

Special mention to Ash Turner – our Team Manager, who flourished in this thankless role... a brilliant human, that the players and parents were extremely grateful for.

The season concluded with a Presentation Night – Max Bremner taking out the B&F (our most consistent player), followed by a tie for 2nd – Archie Murrhly & Noah Will. We also supplied some additional awards:

Most Improved	Kristian Taalikka
Coaches Award	Alexander McElhone
Emerging Talent	Jack Mallick

Thx also to Al Rowlands (U16 Div 3 Coach) – without his collaboration and between the two teams, the season would not have been possible. Thu Nite selection an ongoing highlight.

Good luck to the boys as they enter the U17 level – keep working on your kicking and poise.

Andrew Will

Awards

Best and Fairest Player

Max Bremner

Runner-up Best and Fairest Player (tied)

Archie Murreahy

Runner-up Best and Fairest Player (tied)

Noah Will

Most Improved

Kristian Taalikka

Coaches Award

Alexander McElhone

Emerging Talent

Jack Malick

Under 16 Boys Div 3

Again, this year team numbers for two U16 teams were looking problematic at the start of preseason training. However, with East Malvern Under 16s folding, we received an influx of players which brought our numbers to 49 players and we were right to go with 2 teams.

We also continued our merger with St Kilda City after a successful integration in the previous season.

We used the same selection methodology of the 2 teams as last season, providing an opportunity for all players to get a taste of DIV 1 footy if they wanted to.

From the DIV 3 point of view, we started the season well however, we were again on the wrong end of the SMJFL grading system. This meant our team was not provided with a chance to be competitive with the top teams in our division.

Another concern was the fact we had 31 boys on the U16 list that played APS school footy on the Saturday. This provided late selection headaches Sunday morning with injuries and game time management every game.

One game we forfeited as we had less than 14 players, and a few games we played with 14 or less during the game whilst the other teams played with the full complement of 18 players plus bench. This was an extremely hard time for our players.

The SMJFL inflexible player movement rules between teams put a stranglehold on us, were ineffectual and something that really needs to be reviewed.

Despite the obstacles presented to us, I thought the boys had a good season and developed as players by the season's end. Some of their best performances were when the numbers were against us, and they never gave up which is a credit to the team.

I would like to thank all the volunteers at the club and the hard-working committee. Special thanks to Derek Waters for running the Footy ops.

To my assistant coach, Michael Cormick, whose son didn't play this season, but MC still took on the role – amazing effort and commitment.

To my runner and part time TM, Simon Farrar, thanks for your efforts and advice this season and thanks to the whole Farrar family for filling various roles through the season.

Also, thanks to our Trainers, Ange and Dave, for all your work, especially Ange who continued to be trainer even when her son's season was over after an injury.

Big thank you to our TM, Tom Matthews. He and Ash have been amazing TM's for the whole Under 16 group. Tom continued to do the TM role even though his son was injured in

the first game of the season and didn't come back until the last game of the season – fantastic effort Tom!

To the Div 1 coaches, Simon Williams has been a great source of coaching tactics and drills. His knowledge has been invaluable given his experience and all the boys have grown under his tutelage.

Andrew Will and I have been coaching this group for the past few years and Andrew's work has been nothing short of amazing with this group and something the group will appreciate over time ... will miss those Front Bar Thursday night selections evenings!!!!

Also, thanks to the players and parent group, we essentially have three groups (Bears, Saints and East Malvern) of players and parents and we could not have asked for a better bunch who all integrated seamlessly.

To the lads, work on the skills (Balance, Execution and Process) as we highlighted, and we look forward to a successful 2024 Season!!!

Alistair Rowlands

Awards

Best and Fairest Player (Tied)

Joel Farrar and Jake Sekker

Runner-up Best and Fairest Player

Ben Bayley

Coaches Award

Mack O'Keeffe

Emerging Talent

Lachie Lewicki

Most Improved

Josh Story

Under 17.5 Boys

The season started with a lot of lads from last year's team not sure on their plans. Our preseason training was positive with 10-15 at most of the sessions and the benefit of being able to train with the Caulfield Bears seniors a great motivation and opportunity for the boys to improve their skills and gain confidence against the bigger bodies.

This included Quinn, Leo and Jack playing a practice match for the Bears Senior Reserves team and Ged and new recruit Adam playing in the Bears Senior Firsts practice match against Essendon District league first division top of the ladder team West Coburg. All the boys enjoyed their games and played well, exceeding expectations of the senior coaches.

As we approached the start of the season it became obvious that there were too many of last year's squad that couldn't commit so we started searching for merger options and eventually decided on a merger with St Kilda City who had enough for 1.5 teams. Most of the Bears boys wanted to play together in the Div 3 team however during the year the majority played a few games in the Div 1 team and equipped themselves admirably.

The season started with a game against Ormond who's div 1 team had a bye and they played about 8 of the div1 team in the div 3 game. It was a tightly fought contest and eventually a close 16 point win as we only broke away in the final quarter. A strong performance against a tough opposition and this flowed on to the next couple of grading games as we had a 2 point win against WP Hawks and a 7 point win against St Pauls. In the final grading game we had a strong win against Mordi-Brae with Adam and Ged kicking 5 and 4 goals respectively as they rested in forward pockets.

A couple of changes made by the league saw the ladder scrapped and Prahran who were a top 2 side in Div 2 the previous year being dropped to div 3 this year. Our game against them in round 5 was cancelled when they forfeited at the last minute. This was followed by a 1 point win over East Sandy the following week as the boys managed to find a way to win the close ones and show that our merged team was building strong camaraderie and team spirit.

Next game against Ormond without their div 1 players produced a comfortable 9 goal win which was set up with a 6 goal to 0 first quarter. Our team play, aggressive approach from the backline and committed second efforts from all players across the ground was producing spirited and confidence building results and a credit to all the boys.

Our 2 team squad had grown to over 60 players which presented some challenging selection moments but with the number of injuries and unavailability in both teams meant that we didn't have any lads available and missing games which was great.

The second half of the season continued to see regular rotations between the Div1 and 3 teams to ensure that no boys were over qualified and would miss out on a game when all players were available. The opportunity for the Bears boys to play in the Div 1 side provided great experience and was confidence building as they got to understand the different pressure and pace and that they were all capable of playing at the higher level.

Another win this time by 16 points against Beaumaris in Round 8 meant we had played and beaten all teams in Div 3 (including the forfeit from Prahran). Our real strength was the commitment and effort put in by all players on the ground. We had no weak links and although we were shorter than most opponents, our team spirit and never say die attitude saw us continue to win the close games.

The final game before school holidays saw us lose a close game by 4 points to WP Hawks but we rebounded with strong wins in the next 2 games against St Pauls and Mordie Brae. We faced the undefeated Prahran in round 12 who had obviously manipulated the grading games as they had smashed every team they played since being dropped to div 3. Our boys played with great intent, scoring goals in every quarter, kicking the highest score any team had got against them and holding Prahran to their lowest score for the season. We fell 5 goals short but it gave us confidence knowing that we had a few of our better players unavailable and a few others playing up in the div1 team that come the finals, if we played our best footy we were capable of knocking them off.

The next game against East Sandy saw us fall short by 5 points in another close game and we then finished the H&A season with strong wins against Ormond and Beaumaris which included the boys kicking 10 goals straight in the final quarter for a 12 goal win and a big confidence builder leading into the finals. Unfortunately with the grading games cancelled and East Sandy having less games against the other top sides we finished 3rd a game behind East Sandy but with better percentage. Our elimination final was then set to play WP Hawks who for some reason were given a home ground advantage for this knockout match.

Perhaps unsurprisingly when it came to the finals we had virtually all the boys available which presented the coaches the dilemma of whether to pick a squad leaving boys out or as the rules allowed having 11 on the bench. Because the strength and commitment of the boys had been so even during the year we played with 11 on the bench with regular rotations managed by the boys.

As had been a weakness of ours during a few games this season we started slowly allowing WP Hawks to kick the first 4 goals. A rev up at 1/4 time inspired the boys into action and we kicked 5 goals to 1 to have a 1 point deficit at 1/2 time. The next 2 quarters were goal for goal and a few missed opportunities in the final minutes saw us fall short by 6 points. A disappointing end to what had been a really great season full of individual and team development and improvement.

Really proud of the way the boys played out the year and performed each week building a great team spirit with the St Kilda City boys. Only having 1 loss for the year greater than 6

points showed how close we were to playing off for a premiership but it also highlighted the need to be focussed 100% of game time.

Ash Margerison - B&F and a really great year with a clear victory. Vice Captain who led from the front and was in and under, working hard around the packs and whose second efforts provided inspiration to all.

Ged Saunders - Equal 3rd B&F, 1 vote from 2nd place. Missed a number of games due to school commitments and a regular performer who always gives 100%. Gained invaluable experience with a game and practice match with Bears seniors during 2023.

Adam Scira - Equal 3rd B&F who was a great addition to the club in his first year with the Bears. Only played 5 games in Div 3 including games with 5 goals and 4 goals in the final, 2 games in Div1 and 2 games and a practice match in the Bears seniors.

Marcus Brittain - Most improved award and league leading goal kicker for Div3 2023. A growth spurt and renewed confidence saw Marcus become a really consistent and solid performer kicking multiple goals many times through the year.

Finn McMahon-Johnson - Most Consistent award - Finn was another who grew and regained his confidence during the year providing a solid defensive performer who also provided great drive forward.

Charlie Besnard - A late addition to the team after playing U17.5 last year, Charlie showed his skills and class, kicking goals and taking some great marks around the ground.

Hugo Birrell - 2023 U17.5 captain who motivated the team to lift and perform at their best. Solid in defence and a leader in the way he went about it, was great to have Hugo join the team after playing U17.5 last year.

Jack Joyce - Jack provided great run and drive off the wing. His ability to run deep into defence and then quickly move forward creating play with smart handball was an important part of the team's success. Played well in the Bears seniors practice match early in the year proving his capacity to step up even further next year.

Jake Gurrie - Jake was another key midfielder who played consistently throughout the year, working hard and using his smarts to clear the ball from contested situations and his run, carry and clean skills providing great opportunities to the forwards.

James Gearon - James had an interrupted season with injury but as always played with his heart on his sleeve and attacked every contest fiercely and gave his all in every game.

Jude Shaked - Continued his great form and development from 2022 playing consistent football across the early stages. An unfortunate injury when playing in the Div1 team limited his games later in the season.

Leo Moutsidis - Leo started the year looking to build on a strong 2022 playing well in the Bears Seniors practice match early in the year but was hampered by knee injuries early in the season which eventually ruled him out for the second half of the season.

Oliver Greenleaf - Ollie continued to develop in 2023 and had some great games. His attack on the ball, ferocious tackling and second efforts in a contest helped his teammates stand tall and stop opposition forward moves.

Quinn Cooper - After playing the opening game in Div 1, Quinn moved up to play the remainder of the year in Div1 winning the Equal 3rd B&F. A great consistent year which included a strong performance in the Bears Seniors practice match.

Sam Trbanc - Sam as the youngster of the group was given some big tasks due to also being the tallest on the team. He continued to improve his skills with clean hands and smart handball and his development is a great sign for the future.

Other U17.5 award winners for 2023 - Runner Up B&F Lachie Silva, Most Determined - Sid Stillwell & Dan Rae, Most Improved - Louis Melbourne-Benton, Best clubman - Damon Georgievski.

Awards

Best and Fairest Player

Ash Margerison

Runner-up Best and Fairest Player

Lachie Silva

3rd Best and Fairest Player (Tied)

Ged Saunders and Adam Scira

Most Determined

Sid Stillwill and Dan Rae

Most Improved

Marcus Brittain and Louis Melbourne-Benton

Best Clubman

Damon Georgievski

Most Consistent

Finn McMahon-Johnson

Under 18 Girls St Kilda Bears

For the 2023 season our girls played in Division 1 and had mixed results. We finished in fifth place, and therefore didn't play in the finals, which was disappointing. However, we managed to beat all teams in our division except the eventual premiers, Beaumaris.

In the first four (grading) rounds, we had easy wins. After all the teams were placed in their divisions, with our girls in Division 1, we achieved four wins and 7 losses.

In Round 7 we beat Mordi-Brae by 26 points at Mordi-Brae followed by a 1-point home win in Round 8 against East Malvern at Wattie Watson Oval. Rounds 11 and 14 saw more wins away against the fancied Prahran by 8 points and East Brighton by 17 points.

Our playing list was blessed with much talent. But, for obvious reasons, our most talented girls were often called up to play at the elite level for Oakleigh Chargers (Lily Skinner) and Sandringham Dragons (Isla Mottram and Kera Galaminda). Even state-level volleyball duties had an impact (Hannah Foran).

Gilbert Hennequin

Awards

Best and Fairest Player

Isla Mottram

Runner-up Best and Fairest Player

Kera Galaminda

3rd Best and Fairest Player

Gisele Hennequin

Most Courageous

Lily Skinner

Most Improved

Marnie Allen

Most Determined

Erin Williams

Most Consistent

Georgia Howard

Coaches Award

Holly Le Grand

Best First Year Player

Grace McLardie

Treasurer's Report

The Caulfield Bears JFC have recorded a modest loss in 2023 of \$4392, primarily due to the capital investment in new honour boards. The financial position of the club remains very strong with high cash reserves. There were changes to the way SMJFL registrations were collected and this is reflected in the year to year table below. For reporting purposes, we have also recategorised some expenses to better reflect the financial result.

Past five years comparison summary:

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Receipts					
Registrations (net)*	52886	54068	76339	2975	68202
Food and Drinks (Net)	9059	6762	2440	-	19417
Sponsorship / Grants	19009	25661	16,750	1,750	31686
Other	-	-	1,253	2,254	3,137
Total Receipts	80,954	86,491	96,782	6,979	122,442
Payments					
Registrations	-	66927	36,737	13,758	75,381
SMJFL Fees	19993	-	-	-	-
Merchandise (net)	10390	467	15,747	(1,852)	27,091
Utilities/Insurance	13448	12349	8,659	2,565	11,970
Medical Expenses	10975	-	-	-	-
Ground Staff / Volunteers	9365				
Other	21175	3549	482	620	9,314
Total Payments	85,346	83,292	61,625	15,091	123,756
Net cash increase / (decrease)	(4392)	3,199	35,157	(8,111)	(1,314)

Registrations

Registration income in 2023 changed in line with amendments by the SMJFL. In previous years, all fees were collected by the club and were offset by subscription fees from the SMJFL on a per team basis. This season, the league took a set fee of \$50 per player with the balance remaining with the club. As such, while registrations this year were slightly higher, the recorded revenue is a net figure, and no registration expenses are recorded.

Auskick registrations were higher this year, reflecting increased numbers in both the Saturday morning and Friday Night sessions.

SMJFL Fees

SMJFL fees consist predominantly of umpiring fees that are increasing year on year. As discussed above, there is no longer a per team subscription model, with the league instead taking a fixed fee per registration.

Merchandise

A complete stocktake of all saleable items was completed and inventory recorded at cost. In addition to this, the cost of jumpers and training tops that are provided to players have been allocated to the Cost of Goods Sold and recorded and categorised as Merchandise in the comparison table above. There are some miscellaneous items held outside the recorded inventory that will be resold or gifted next year.

Canteen

Canteen revenues were up in 2023, with additional modified teams enabling the canteen to be open at two venues on several weekends this season. The increased usage of sponsor vouchers rather than club funded 'Bear of the Week' awards also meant that the net profit for the canteen was increased. Anna Cahill and her team once again did a fantastic job in enabling the canteen to open multiple sites and run seamlessly. On occasions the ground staff were also able to run a BBQ which was well received. The costs associated with utilising paid staff are included in the net canteen figure above.

Medical Expense

Medical expenses are higher in 2023 for several reasons. There was increased utilisation of Colmed medical staff due to two grounds being used. In addition to this, the club invested in trainers by offering to cover the costs of volunteers gaining or upgrading their medical qualifications to assist in ensuring that there would be sufficient trainers available across all teams. This offer was taken up by over twenty parents and managed successfully by Joe Cremin.

Fundraising/Sponsorship

Overall cash support from our sponsors was down on previous years, though past and new sponsors provided value through restaurant vouchers and team dinners that were well received. The committee is working hard to lock in several major sponsors long term with the expectation that this is an area for growth needed to offset the rising costs of running the club. Club sponsors were also recognised with certificates of appreciation as we aim to build on our existing relationships.

Capital Investment

The club this year invested in a once-off upgrade to the club's honour boards. This expense was paid out of the operating account and fully depreciated (\$4.7k) this season as reflected in the profit and loss report.

Profit and Loss Statement for year ending 30th September 2023:

Trading Income

Canteen and Bar Sales	36,040.12
Grants	3,509.00
Merchandise Sales	14,249.95
Registrations Auskick	743.21
Registrations Junior	52,142.68
Sponsorship	15,500.00
Total Trading Income	122,184.96

Cost of Sales

Cost of Goods Sold (Merchandise)	7,659.30
Total Cost of Sales	7,659.30

Gross Profit	114,525.66
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Operating Expenses

Advertising	440.00
Auskick/Recruitment	41.95
Bank Fees	236.40
Canteen Expenses	20,974.65
Canteen Staff	6,006.30
Cleaning	120.00
Coaches, Team Managers	4,802.18
Consulting & Accounting	147.30
Depreciation	4741.00
Entertainment	1,705.00
Footballs	5605.00
Ground Hire	7,533.96
Ground Manager	4,562.74
Insurance	1,686.52
Light, Power, Heating	2,605.95
Medical Expenses	10,975.16
Merchandise Purchases	16980.82
Newsletter	2,040.00
Office Expenses	210.69
Repairs and Maintenance	1,261.30
SMJFL - Fines	310.00
SMJFL - Subscriptions	902.00
SMJFL Umpires	18,780.78
Telephone & Internet	240.00
Trophies and Awards	5,480.05
Website	528.00
Total Operating Expenses	118,917.75

Net Profit	(4,392.09)
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50/100 Award Winners

During the 2023 season we celebrated the following key game milestones.

100 Games	50 Games
Alexander McElhone	Adam Shkoulev
Archie Murrhy	Alexander Ratner
Archie Sweeney-Johnston	Andie Krom
Ash Margerison	Archie Newton
Athan Ioannidis	Banjo Goudie
Ben Bayley	Ben Affinita
Benny Dever	Catia Bodasso
Brody Rossney	Delilah Clohesy
Carlos Andrews	Eamonn Walker
Grady Kerin	Eli Watts
Jack Joyce	Georgia Miller
Jack Mallick	Grace McIntyre
Jaikiah Honner	Hamilton Fryar
Jake Gurrie	Hamish Birch
Jake Sekker	Hamish O'Brien
Jed Williams	Henry Bytheway
Joel Farrar	Jack Madafferri
Johnny Roussos	Kayla Vais
Leo Moutsidis	Kingsley Harjanta
Lewis Goudie	Lara Melkis
Lincoln Higginbotham	Lara Sullivan
Luke Mahimarajan	Lara van Lint
Mack O'Keeffe	Leona Clohesy
Marcus Brittain	Lily McDonald
Max Lightbody	Maddie Hopley
Ned O'Neill	Matthew Fardell
Nick Jones	Maya Jorgensen
Ollie McCurdy	Oscar Bremner
Patrick Rowlands	Rocco Fevola
Phoenix McCabe	Sam Trbanc
Quinn Cooper	Seb McCredie
Raph Gauci	Seb Sparrow-Cooper
Zander Ross	Sheldon Quirin
	Sienna Cipriani
	Sydney Dalton
	Yiani Tsakirakis

2023 Committee

- President - Kerry Widjaja
- President - Peter Bremner
- Secretary - Matt Dry
- Treasurer - David Ratner
- Head of Football Operations - Derek Waters
- Team Manager Coordinator - Nicole Sternbergs
- Registrar - Alex Hopley
- Sponsorship Coordinator - Nic Atherinos
- Merchandise Coordinator - Nikki Hogan
- Canteen Coordinator - Anna Cahill
- Trainer & Medical Coordinator - Joe Cremin
- Child Safety Officer - Scott Millar
- Auskick Administration - David Ratner
- Social Media - Christina Papasavvas
- Incident Officer - Karen Massier