

TULLAMARINE FOOTBALL CLUB 2016 END OF SEASON REPORT

Season 2016 unfolded as follows:

R1 v GL: an impressive first half followed by a lacklustre second half but a satisfying 30 point victory against the heavily touted big improvers of 2016 in Glenroy.

R3 v TL: similar to above, a commanding half time lead with things evening out in the second but a 10 goal victory this early in the season offered encouraging signs for a team definitely on the improve.

R4 v CB: back to earth with a massive thud receiving a crushing 93 point thumping courtesy of the league's heavyweight and preseason flag favourite Craigieburn. A disappointing display that, even this early in the season, raised some serious questions about our legitimacy as a finals contender.

R5 v OP: responded brilliantly to efforts of the week prior with a 10 goal victory against genuine finals contender thanks mostly to the contribution of ALL 22 players

R6 v HS: our worst performance of the year and Club's first ever loss to Hillside with a 66 point drubbing in an embarrassing display that needed to be seen to be believed. Such a defeat had the potential to completely de-rail our season so a critical few weeks lay ahead whereby our leadership and resolve would be severely tested.

R7 v HD: a more committed and genuine effort this time around with a 90 point victory at home against a spirited opposition who had beaten Hillside 2 weeks prior

R8 v WM: a one point loss at home to Westmeadows would suggest a tightly contested affair but fact is, we played 2 quarters of football (first and last) and were soundly beaten for most of the day. With our season on the brink of collapse it was time for some honest appraisals of exactly where we were at and what we stood for.

R9 v NS: behind at half time we, our playing group responded superbly to notch up a pleasing 36 point away victory which should have been greater had it not been for a number of un-disciplined acts that kept the door slightly ajar for the competitive Northern Saints.

R10 v GL: a tough game in heavy conditions had us trailing at half time but, yet again, Tullamarine fought its way back into the game in a pleasing sign that the determination and belief amongst the playing group was finally starting to emerge. Our 39 point victory was a slight improvement from the previous encounter but it carried far greater significance in many ways given it was a victory we had to really fight hard for.

R12 v TL: yet another come from behind victory with the result not guaranteed till late in the game. Our 31 point victory does not do justice to just how tight the game was for much of the day so another pleasing result giving wins at this time of season are vital.

R13 v CB: arguably our best performance for the year with a committed effort for the full four quarters handing Craigieburn its first loss of the year. We controlled the game from beginning to end with our 27 point victory sending shockwaves throughout the league given the generally considered unbeatable Craigieburn was in fact beatable.

R14 v OP: a massive game that would have a significant bearing on the finals fortunes of both teams. We started poorly but worked our way back into the game and looked well in control for much of the day. Several concentration lapses at various stages could have been costly but, thankfully, we snuck away with a 9 point win in a gutsy performance resulting in a hard fought victory.

R15 v HS: given what happened in our previous encounter this was a game we were certainly looking forward to. The desire and application of the playing group was evident early on as we raced out to a commanding early lead and were never seriously challenged thereafter. Whilst the winning margin of 48 points was not too dissimilar to our half time lead it nonetheless represented a 114 point turnaround from the result of Round 6 in a satisfying victory and far more accurate reflection of the type of team Tullamarine hoped to stand for.

R16 v HD: a brilliant first half put the game out of reach of the opposition early but, once again, we lacked the killer instinct to completely blow them off the park. The 67 point winning margin was only 7 points more than what we led by at half time.

R17 v WM: an important game for both teams with the possibility of a Top 2 finish on offer for the victor. An even first quarter but we hit our straps early in the second quarter to put some space between us and the opposition and this trend continued for much of the day in a professional and dominant display yielding an impressive 40 point away victory against one of the pre-season Flag favourites.

R18 v NS: with our 2nd position on the ladder assured and only pride on the line we rested a few players in preparation for the finals campaign ahead but still managed to defeat an under-manned Northern Saints by 98 points in a pleasing end to our regular season.

Semi-Final 2 v CB: we were blown off the park by a rampaging Craigieburn whereby we were completely out-worked, out-muscled and out played by a more committed opposition resulting in a totally unacceptable 88 point finals loss. Our best players were barely sighted for most of the day and, overall, we showed very little resistance and / or composure under the heat of finals pressure.

Preliminary Final v OP: expecting a tough, close game we were certainly not disappointed in a classic finals arm-wrestle that could have gone either way at various stages. Our inability to take our chances up forward kept the game closer than what we would have liked but to fight back when headed late in the final quarter is testament to the amazing spirit and belief that exists amongst our playing group who just refused to lay down. A courageous 6 point victory that put Tullamarine into the Grand Final and a chance to atone for our poor performance the week prior.

Grand Final v CB: overall, it was a determined and courageous performance by Tullamarine against the red hot flag favourites and super talented Craigieburn outfit. However, the fact remains, the game was there to be won at three quarter time and we were simply unable to take our game up a gear and to a higher level when we needed to most in order to mount a serious challenge.

Put simply, some very sloppy defending throughout the day, the lack of accountability by our midfield in the second half, missed opportunities in front of goal in the first half when we were well on top combined with our inability to take a contested mark inside 50 all day was the difference between the two teams.

Whilst we managed to negate most of their key play makers for much of the day we just couldn't quite sustain our effort for the full 120 minutes.

End result was a gut wrenching 20 point defeat.

Unfortunately, we were simply beaten by a better team on the day but the desire, attitude, discipline, effort, courage and resilience of all 22 Tullamarine players could never be questioned.

Such a loss and thoughts of what might have been will surely sting for some time, as it should, but the season overall has been one of great achievement and progress.

We lost just five games for the year, three of which were to Craigieburn which is a telling sign of the gap that existed between both teams. One other loss was against Westmeadows by a solitary point back in Round 8. The fifth and arguably most disappointing loss of all was our 66 point defeat at the hands of Hillside.

Nonetheless, season 2016 yielded the following results:

- won 13 games, lost 3 in regular season
- won 12 games by 27 points or more in regular season
- we won 1 game by 9 points in regular season
- we lost 1 game by 1 point in regular season
- won 1 game and lost 2 games post season
- 41 different players played seniors
- 18 new players played seniors in 2016 (total of 38 between 2015-2016)
- 30 different goal kickers
- 71 players represented Tullamarine across seniors and reserves
- we ranked 4th in league for points scored (season average: 98 pts, + 22 pts from 2015)
- we ranked 2nd in league for least points scored against (season average: 69 pts, - 5 pts from 2015)
- our 2015 / 16 points differential was 27 points (+ 22 for, - 5 against)
- highest winning margin 98 points v Northern Saints in Round 18
- highest losing margin 93 points v Craigieburn in Round 4
- 0 players reported in seniors for second year in a row

As per every season, our ability to play each weekend was only made possible thanks to the special efforts of so many hard working Tullamarine volunteers and helpers. It would be impossible to list everyone but those deserving special mention includes the following:

Assistant Coaches: Sholly, Hicksy, Rod and Justin: thanks guys for all your support and hard work. Put simply, I could not do this role on my own and Tullamarine FC would not be the professional and highly competitive footy club it is without your contribution. Thanks also for your friendship.

Runner Labs: stepped up when no one else could or would. A massive help in a difficult but important role and certainly made a big difference with his contribution.

Paddy: big thanks again for ensuring every need, however big or small, is dealt with in a timely and professional manner which gives our playing group every opportunity of being successful.

Trainers: for their training and game day efforts in preparing our players and keeping them on the park and also assisting them when they are not

Jo Hardman: as per last year, did a mountain of work from November onwards keeping up with the avalanche of admin. associated with players coming and going on all fronts.

Water boys: Macca and Gavin plus Lachy Sholl for doing the thankless task of running water

Labs and his game day support crew: not quite the season we all hoped for but it was not through lack of trying. Did an amazing job to ensure our Reserves team were as competitive as they were, despite the challenges of so many injuries and changes each week

Leadership Group: special thanks to the Leadership Group for ensuring the high standards we set for ourselves are maintained but also ensuring professional and mature dialogue takes place when they are not.

Stats: all the volunteers and injured players who helped on the sidelines taking game day stats.

Fiona Potter, Jade Cope and all the ladies for their tireless volunteer work in preparing meals, working the canteen, event planning, fundraising and so much more behind the scenes work that players and coaches rarely see but certainly appreciate.

Thank you also to Michael and the TFC Committee for their un-wavering support and tireless efforts in positioning Tullamarine as a family friendly club and positive environment for people to enjoy and for continuously striving to make Tullamarine the professional and competitive football club that it is.

NB: apologies in advance for those I am sure I have missed

Finally, to the Tullamarine playing group of 2016.

Clearly, we have come a long way in 2 years, but just as clearly, not yet far enough. To be a Premiership Team requires a commitment and sacrifice that is far greater than the average standard and certainly far greater than that of your competitors. The collective drive and determination of Tullamarine FC to want to rise to this challenge and to consistently demonstrate the level of commitment and sacrifice necessary to achieve Premiership success is still a question that remains unanswered.

Consistently being thereabouts year in and year out in such a competitive environment is highly credible however now going on with the job and going one step further should be what motivates us all.

The confidence to stand up in big games comes from training hard and perfecting your craft. There is simply no other way, so all players need to begin determining what their level of commitment for 2017 will be and ensure, once decided, it does not waiver.

Over the last two years we have definitely seen a noticeable improvement across the professional training standards we have endeavoured to implement. Our continued focus on player development remains a critical pathway to overall team improvement and the ongoing fostering of a team first culture are all areas where positive steps are continuously being made.

It is hoped the foundation that has been laid will provide the necessary springboard for Tullamarine to take those important next steps.

In closing, it would be remiss of me not to mention the outstanding contribution made to Tullamarine FC by each of our retiring Demons.

C.Laurie: having watched EDFL football (mostly at Premier level) for well over 35 years Col Laurie is undoubtedly one of the best EDFL footballers I have seen. More importantly, he is one of the most humble and respectful individuals I have seen at a football club. Unfortunately, not the fairy tale ending we had all hoped for Col but he has been a great leader and great clubman over a very long

period of time. Col will be a great loss to all at Tullamarine but his contribution to TFC will never be forgotten and will live on forever.

D.Brockway: another wonderful servant of Tullamarine Football Club and an absolutely great team man. Brocky's determined approach week in and week out was matched only by his outstanding leadership and preparedness to always do the team thing. Will be sorely missed but his contribution to TFC, particularly over the last 2 years, cannot be understated.

D.Scott: was not expected to play football again following a severe knee injury almost 3 years ago. The determination and commitment displayed by Junior to get back on the park to again don the Demons jumper was simply awe-inspiring. Very few would be aware of his regular 5:30am training sessions and continuous rehab combined with his relentless approach to footy training itself in order to give himself every opportunity of getting back. As expected, he played his heart out every week and has the admiration and respect from all of us for his courage to never surrender.

C.Burns: 2 years of great leadership and service. It would have been easy for Chris to play out his career without too much emotional investment but in fact the opposite occurred. There was rarely a moment, both on-field or off, whereby Chris did not go out of his way to share his experience and knowledge to help make our younger players and overall playing group better. Best in Finals last year and one of our most reliable defenders all year round.

N.Tieppo: whilst not definite, but highly likely, Tank's services may also be lost. Having had countless soft tissue injuries throughout the year we never really got to see the best of him. However, his performance in the Grand Final was exactly why he was so highly valued and considered such an important part of our best 22.

A.Scott: whilst not retiring (we hope) Adam will be undergoing some off season surgery with an extensive recovery period expected. Despite dislocating his shoulder on numerous occasions Adam's courage to ignore the pain and the real danger of suffering further injury was inspiring to watch and is typical of a his never say die approach to his football, his teammates and his club.

Lastly, thank you to the wives, partners and families of all the players. The almost year-long commitment of playing senior EDFL football has never been greater and without the support and understanding from those closest very little could possibly be achieved.

Sincerely

Anthony Leydin

Senior Coach, TFC