

Under 10s 2016 season report

The 2016 season was planned to be a development of what the team worked on in 2015. 8 players moved up to the Under 12s and so we were left with the need to recruit some new players. We were fortunate to pick up 7 new players and had Brock Pearse return from a year away from football. With 7 third year players, 7 second year players and the 7 new players for 2016, we had a great balance of experience and enthusiasm to draw upon. We started training with lots of enthusiasm – looking to build on the three wins earned last season.

As with last year I informed the team that I would be rotating the players around the ground and every player, barring injury, would play 3 quarters each week. I would also never ‘drag’ a player as I believed they would benefit from rectifying mistakes on the ground rather than off it. The players responded and grew in confidence over the season.

With some solid weeks of training early in February the team was excited by the thought of a practice match against Hillside – we played this side last year and had mixed results. The idea was that this would be a good opportunity to see if any improvement had been made. Unfortunately we played their Division 1 team and the result was as expected – we were soundly beaten. With only 1 practice match we hit the regular season unsure of where we were at – Division 5 (where we were last year seemed to be the right place for us).

The first match saw us play Coburg Districts and we managed to scrape over the line by 4 points. The season had started well, our new players were getting involved, our experienced players were showing their development and we didn’t have to wait 6 weeks for a win as we did the previous season.

In fact, the team was showing so much improvement that after 4 rounds we were undefeated and moved up to Division 4. After 7 rounds we were still undefeated and returning players such as Rory Pixton, Brody Bateson, Alex Sirp and Ethan Augustus had all kicked their first goal for the club. Of our 7 new players, 5 kicked their first goal for the club, showing that we were prepared to share the ball around and we had confidence in our new teammates.

Round 8 saw us lose for the first time – we played a strong side from Keilor who, like us, were improving each week. It was good for us to be tested and showed us that it may not always be easy and we would have to work if we wanted to be successful.

The remaining 6 weeks saw us have mixed results – we lost to Hillside, Aberfeldie and Moonee Valley but won enough games to finish third on the ladder. With the exception of the Aberfeldie game where we were outplayed, we leading or in the game for each match and we could have finished higher on the ladder. However, third place meant we were playing finals and had a double chance – a really good effort compared to last season and a reflection on how far the team had come.

Each and every player had shown some improvement, Riley Fiteni and Ryan Bryant (a new player) added to the number of players to kick their first goal and our leaders continued to show their willingness to bring other players into the team.

We entered the finals with some confidence as we had performed well against all top 5 sides and our first opponent, Moonee Valley, was a team we should have beaten earlier in the season, falling short through inaccurate kicking and being overrun in the last quarter.

Our team voted Zavier Augustus and Josh Cowell as captains for the finals – a good reward for their leadership during the season.

Our finals campaign was not as good as what we had hoped for. In both games we lost after controlling much of the play, but failing to score. Our last match was particularly disappointing as we had outplayed Keilor and looked the

better side all day. While the players were disappointed I couldn't have been prouder of the way they fought each game out and gave it their all.

Overall this was a good season with us playing good football, listening to instructions and showing enormous improvement over the year. It is hoped they all come back in 2017 where they will nearly all stay together as Under 11's.

As coach, it was a great experience to look after these players and hopefully teach them about the game, improve their skills and get them to enjoy the game. I had great support from the Committee, my Team Manager, Tanya, my runner Nick, trainer Steve and my assistants, Paul and Chris. Lots of other parents were involved at training and on match days so thanks to them as well.

A big thank you to the 21 players who listened, laughed, played hard, improved and had fun along the way.

Hope to see you all again in 2017.

This is what was said about each player at Presentation Night:

1	Riley	FITENI	Riley again demonstrated his value as a backline player – not so much in the back pocket this year but as a back flanker who has now got the confidence to leave his player and really attack the ball. Kicked his first goal for the club late in the year. A real year of improvement
2	Emily	FITENI	Emily continued to try hard – she is fierce at the ball when it is in her area and is a good tackler. She gained some confidence in her marking and now needs to work on her kicking – I hope she keeps playing as she does enjoy the games.
3	Brody	BATESON	Brody continues to be one of our best tacklers – fierce but legal, you don't easily get away from him. Time forward and on the ball this year saw him really develop and he finally kicked his first ever goal. Our Most Improved Player for 2016.
4	Liam	CUSACK	As with last year Liam gets hit a bit – it happens when you are small and get to the bottom of the pack. Played some great games on ball and developed a lot of confidence this year. Awarded Most Courageous for 2017
5	Jackson	BASARANOWICZ	Jackson didn't grow much over the off-season but his heart is still one of the biggest we have. Always in the play, always tackling. His kicking has improved this year and he also uses his voice more – expect bigger and better things again in 2017.

6	Oliver	GALLOWAY	Still loves a goal – and he kicked lots this year. Also improved his play by spending more time in the backline this year. Good on the training track and always willing to listen.
7	Zavier	AUGUSTUS	He runs, he kicks well, he takes good marks overhead. Zavier had an outstanding season and was rewarded by his team by being voted Captain for the finals and rewarded by the EDFL as Runner-up in the league best and fairest. Our Best & Fairest for 2016 – a joy to coach and to watch play.
8	Ryan	BRYANT	New to the club and the game. He fitted in well but started slowly with his skills. Constant practice (always at training early) and he improved steadily. At home at Centre Half Back and our No. 2 ruckman. Kicked a goal this year and will develop quickly after a good first season.
9	Josh	COWELL	Perhaps the heart of the team. Always gives 100% - runs, chases, tackles. This year he added the willingness to share the ball more and develop confidence in his teammates. Co-captain for the finals was recognition of his value to the team – 3 rd in our Best & Fairest.
10	Declan	FLATMAN	Declan has been training at Tulla with his dad and older brother for a few years now. He has been desperate to play and finally got his chance. Really hard at it for a 1 st year player but has good skills to back it up. Kicked a goal this season and was awarded our best 1 st Year Player.
11	Maddison	LEWIS	Our second girl – Maddie was new to the team this year and immediately started to show real heart. She attacks the ball all the time, never gives up and tries to improve herself each week. Close to kicking a goal this year (3 behinds) I expect her to improve next season.
12	Brock	PEARSE	Returned to the club after a year off – loves a goal but willing to go and get the ball to make that happen. Improved his team work during the year and will be better if he returns next season.
15	Jack	SLEETH	Like all players Jack showed improvement over the year. His last 5 weeks however were exceptional. His attack on the ball, his decision-making and his kicking all went to another level. At home at full back he did score a goal this season. Awarded the Coaches Award for 2016

16	Tyler	CAULFIELD	<p>Tyler showed what training, listening and application can do. His improvement was really noticeable, particularly his marking. Great runner and will do any job you ask him to do.</p> <p>Awarded Most Determined for 2016.</p>
17	Tyrhys	WOODHOUSE	<p>Small, quiet and new to the team – but what an impact. Loves playing and training, loves getting a kick and loves a goal. Tackles better in the forward line than the backline but he will get better. Great start to what we hope is a long career at Tullamarine.</p>
19	Joseph	RALLIS	<p>Awarded Leading Goal Kicker for 2016 Joseph is at home at Centre Half Forward when we have an open forward line. Also pretty good when playing on ball. Lots of improvement shown this year and this should continue.</p>
21	Cooper	SZCZYGIELSKI	<p>Another first year player. Cooper is in and under, a good turn of speed and has the confidence to run and take the opposition on. Kicked a few goals this year but equally good down back.</p>
22	Max	PIXTON	<p>Very, very quiet, but very, very capable. Played all over the ground and hard to pick his best spot on the ground. In and under player who works hard all the time. Kicked a couple of goals this year and showed real improvement over the year.</p>
24	Alex	SIRP	<p>With a year's experience and more confidence, this player grew in stature over the season. On ball he is good, off the half back flank he is better. Runs well and has improved his decision making.</p> <p>Awarded the Best Player of the Finals.</p>
27	Rory	PIXTON	<p>Runner up in the Best & Fairest this player gives his all every week. Gets hurt often because he puts his body on the line. At home in the backline but good forward (kicked his first goal this season) and on ball.</p> <p>A true all-rounder and an excellent leader.</p>
30	Ethan	AUGUSTUS	<p>Our number 1 ruckman, Ethan improved in all aspects of the game this year, particularly his willingness to attack the footy and take on the opposition. He can run and carry the ball, improved his kicking enormously and showed great heart all year.</p>