



Macedon Cats – October 2020 Newsletter

President's Report

Introduction

It is quite a thought to deliver the President's report for the Season that didn't happen!

What a year it has been for Macedon Cats Football Netball Club ... and for the many people associated with the Club and also those who have not. The Club, the Coaches, Players, Support Staff and Committee have had to do what many in the population have had to do – act in a very agile fashion, constantly developing plans and then renewing them ... and then changing them again!

Prior to the new committee being formed last October, significant effort had been made by the Committee and friends of the Club to develop a more sustainable framework and plan for the Club. It is no secret the finances were in need of some repair but there was a plan to address that situation through the year.

The New Committee's efforts and planning have been significant for both "on field" and "off field" activities, with some innovations in place at all levels of the Club operations.

"On Field"

Our Senior Coaches

With respect to 'On Field' activities, we owe an enormous amount of gratitude to our senior coaches. Both coaches responded to the COVID circumstances in a highly professional manner, with some excellent team building communication and training until the point that the RDFNL declared that the season could not go ahead. I am delighted to announce that both coaches have committed to coaching for the Club for the next three years.

Netball

Ciara Stewart, as the incumbent Senior Netball Coach, in conjunction with the Club's Netball support team, ably lead by Jo Gooch (who held together everything on admin), was able to retain many of the 2019 players. Pre-season training in netball with selection trials and regular training was yet again extremely thorough. We are very fortunate to have Ciara as our Coach. Thank you also to the other Netball Coaches. Watch this space for some great succession planning on the admin front!

Football

The club was also very fortunate when Alistair Meldrum, who is well known in the Macedon Ranges Community, was appointed as Senior Coach, following the resignation of our previous Coach, Ben Tankard.

Al, devoted a huge amount of time and effort in securing a new playing squad with new coaches. His focus was on maximising the number of "return" players; those with a strong connection to the area, in addition to some excellent players from further afield who bring strong skills and values to our Club.





Riddell District Football Netball League (RDFNL)

It is pleasing to report that the RDFNL has now been able to leave the AFL Goldfields. Whilst the AFL Goldfields Commission, was brought in with the very best of intentions, in reality the benefits were outweighed by some significant downsides, in particular, with respect to the playing and affiliation fee structure and to a degree, unnecessary bureaucratic complexity, creating large financial burdens on clubs.

The RDFNL President has done an excellent job in negotiating the outcome. It is pleasing to report that Jordan Doyle has been appointed General Manager. Jordan brings a wealth of experience but also knowledge of the region and Clubs through his prior involvement. Joining Jordan will be Aaron McLean, a former Macedon player and Club administrator, in an expanded role to his pre-COVID appointment.

We wish them all the best and encourage them to be extremely proactive in ensuring the ongoing sustainability of the League, which is challenged to a degree at the linking point between the expanding metro area and regional Victoria.

“Off the Field”

Off the Field is an important part of the Club. Without the “Off the Field” there is no “On the Field”.

Events

A number of events were planned for the year. It has been disappointing not to have held any events, particularly the New events for the Year

The following were planned events:

- Season Launch & Launch of New lights – to be opened by Minister & Proudly sponsored by Bendigo Bank.
- Film Night on the Oval – “The Legend of Ben Hall”
- Cats Golf Day
- Ladies Day Lunch
- Ball in conjunction with Macedon Tennis Club
-and many others

Sponsorship Coordinator

A key objective for this year was to recruit a sponsorship coordinator, with the position solely dedicated to recruiting and supporting sponsors.

Andrew Meldrum volunteered to fill the position and has already made great headway, re-enforcing the strategy and need to have a dedicated person in this role.

We are delighted to announce a new major sponsor – ‘Town, Coast and Country Realty’, a reputable local Real Estate Agency, who has made a long-term commitment of support to the Club. We are also delighted to announce the support of ‘Kyneton Toyota’ of our Major Club Raffle soon. More to be announced later but evidence of the progress the Club has made in this area.

Underlying the on-going support that we endeavour to provide our sponsors, has been the engagement of ‘Digital Freak’ to redevelop the website and social media platforms. This has commenced with the aid of a State Government grant. The Club also aims to support businesses that support the club through the development of the ‘Cats Connect’ program, with the aim of better assisting businesses and Club members to connect to the Macedon Cats business network.



The Committee

The Committee and its members have been *excellent* in the past year. Many hours of hard work have been devoted to the goals of providing a sustainable club. Thank you to ALL members for their support and input with a very high attendance rate for all scheduled and other focussed meetings.

Finances

One of the main aims of the year was to reduce the Club debt. This was too high after a difficult year in 2019, where many things just did not work out, due in part to not having an u19's football team. This situation was no one's fault but it does highlight the inherent risk of a sporting club where commitments are made to players prior to the end of the previous season. The current (and next year's) committee will be working hard to address this situation.

I am pleased to report that, despite COVID-19, some significant progress has been made in that area and thanks to the input and expertise of Sally Brennan and Rob Hyland, the accounts reporting has improved.

I would like to thank the few entities and people who have been extremely flexible and supportive of the Club during this time.

As a matter of record, during the year and thanks to the work of Craig Hildebrand, the Club was successful in obtaining three grants.

Facilities

In addition to the construction of lights for both the Football and Netball playing areas, a real opportunity was presented by the Macedon Ranges Shire Council team to carry out major drainage work on the oval. The work, completed in May, was a real win and will ensure much better playing conditions for future generations of Macedon footballers and cricketers.





The Future

Formalised collaboration with the Junior Football Netball Club (Junior FNC)

Recently, the Club held a strategic planning session (over Zoom of course!). Like last year, where we brought in some non-committee thinkers, this year we were pleased to have the involvement of the Junior FNC.

It was an extremely productive session and led to a realisation that both clubs would benefit from a much more aligned strategic and operational working relationship.

Both entities will be discussing opportunities over the next month with the aim of having some form of agreement developed. It is early days, but I am optimistic of a good outcome in this area. There is so much more to be gained through collaboration and partnership, as was evidenced by the joint approach to the Tony Clark Reserve lighting project with the football netball and tennis clubs jointly applying for funding with an outstanding result there for everyone to see and hopefully use soon.

Many seeds have been sown – focus on future sustainability

On reflection, the year has been a productive one. Many seeds for future success have been sown.

It is now up to the new committee WITH the help of many supporters to deliver on the vision of the Club which has, is and will be of so much value to OUR community.

A thanks to some of our key stakeholders

It remains for me to thank the many stakeholders, club officials, volunteers, non-members and members, who have supported the Club this year. There are many individuals as well as entities who have done so.

Jo Gooch retires this year from the position of netball coordinator – what a great job Jo has done over the last few years; never misses anything and has been enormously dedicated. Thank you, Jo.

At an organisational level I would particularly like to thank the RDFNL for their handling of the last year as well as the Macedon Ranges Shire Council both of which contributed in many ways to our vision of having a vibrant and thriving club, capable of providing a safe and invigorating environment for our young talent to grow and excel.

Andrew Dick

President

Macedon Football Netball Club



Senior Football Coach 2020 Report – Alistair Meldrum



2020 has not panned out the way anyone planned

In the context of being appointed Senior Football Coach for this season, much planning, preparation and the building of meaningful relationships on and off the track occurred prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is fair to say though, that nobody could have anticipated what was to come in the middle of March.

I always try and bounce forward and am opposed to looking back. What I will say though, is that I am extremely proud to be associated with the MFNC and the people who support it in official and unofficial roles.

The committee have worked extremely hard in the most unforeseen circumstances that a Community Sporting Club could ever face. Whilst these people who volunteer their time are few in number, their commitment and dedication to ensuring the sustainability and viability of our Club has been nothing short of extraordinary. Thank you.

To the players and coaches, it was probably inevitable that Season 2020 was never going to get started, however, the preparedness of the coaches to still provide opportunities to train, interact and stay connected and the players who took those opportunities was critical to positively contributing to the mental and physical wellbeing of everyone.

Season 2021 still holds plenty of the unknown, but the appetite and drive of the players to get started has been extremely pleasing. The commitment of the players for next season has supported this overall mindset. Again, the coaches and I will continue to provide as many opportunities as we can to the players within the guidelines we are given.

Stay tuned to our Club Facebook Page and Website each day for all the player announcements as we target a return to sanctioned Pre-Season Training on November 23 – hopefully!

Thank you again to everyone involved with the Club and within our Community. If 2020 has taught us anything about Community Sport and the opportunity to be involved in a Community Club, it is that we value it as an integral part of our everyday lives.

I look forward to a far more positive 2021 with you all, as we continue to adapt and overcome challenges through mutual support.

Alistair Meldrum

Senior Football Coach



Senior Netball Coach 2020 Report – Ciara Stewart



Netball Report 2020

What a year! Instead of walking away celebrating at least one possible premiership, I look back on the year that could have been.

We had a strong preseason, kicking off the year with our training camp in Bacchus Marsh in February. The focus this year was not on the sport of netball but on teamwork, work ethic, support and resilience. We were lucky to have 3 young footballers join us on the camp, giving our netballers a great opportunity to make connections with other members in our club.

While on camp, we had a guest speaker presenting information on how to be that 1% stronger/ better than our opposition. We also spent quality time in our player group teams discussing what each individual and team wanted to get out of the 2020 season. We walked away with trademarks for each team and a strong sense of the success to come in season 2020.

Due to COVID restrictions our 'compulsory' weekly training became 'optional' and in place of 1 session available each week, 3 sessions were opened up enabling the players to train in positions rather than a team and the club adhering to the RDFNL and government COVID restrictions. This had strong success with our mid courters and goalers. We continued training for as long as we could until the second round of COVID restrictions were enforced.

All teams stayed connected throughout this time via Facebook and in Messenger groups. The community and club feeling of friendship and comradery has remained strong this year. Players were also very excited to receive their uniforms.

At the conclusion of the 2020 season that wasn't, we received the announcement that Jo Gooch was resigning from the Netball Operations Manager position which she had held for over 5 years. We thank Jo for her commitment, passion and dedication to our sport, our players and our club. Jo has been an incredible supporter of netball and to the playing group and has always advocated for our group, whether it be to the RDFNL or at committee level. We know Jo will still be at our games showing her support for the club she loves so very much.



Looking ahead to 2021

Janelle Tate, Sally Brennan and myself got together and made an action plan for 2021. The action plan is outlined below:

1. Secure a Netball Operations Coordinator/ Manager

Janelle Tate has expressed interest in coordinating this role for 2021. Many of Jo Gooch's previous role will be distributed to members of the netball group.

2. Secure coaches and support staff for 2021

19 and Under- Karlee DeBono

C grade - Sally Brennan

A and B grade - Ciara Stewart

Statistics - Glenn Williams

3. Rebrand what playing for Macedon Cats looks like for 2021

A grade players will need to commit to weekly training, with one exception, and all players in the club are expected to attend training. Lack of attendance will result in reduced court time and a payment reduction for A grade players.

Structures and systems will be the focus of our preseason for all teams. Player development and a 'scholarship' program will be introduced for players recognised for their talent and commitment. Further work will be done on this over the coming months.

4. Contact A grade players and get a verbal commitment (training no longer optional)

All 9 2020 A grade players from 2019/2020 have verbally agreed to the conditions of playing season 2021 with Cats.

5. Contact all B, C and 19's players from 2020 and get an expression of interest for 2021

All players except two have expressed their interest in returning in 2021.

6. Decision to have trials for 2021 season

We had had a few new or returning players contact Ciara interested in attending trials for Macedon.

We have also had 2 defensive players that are no longer eligible to play 19's in 2021.

We need to open up opportunities for existing players to trial for higher grade selection.

Coaches need the flexibility to drop or promote players for the 2021 season.

7. Wait for restrictions to ease to organise a Trials and Training calendar

8. Announce team and begin training for season 2021

9. Train weekly at New Gisborne Netball courts on a Thursday night, with intention of occasionally having dinner with the footballers.

10. Organise a Netball Camp for 2021 with NETBALL being the focus.

We anticipate a very successful 2021 season, with high hopes of perhaps finding success with more than one premiership, however, most importantly having fun within a team spirit that highlights the benefits of belonging to a vibrant and caring community focused club.

Ciara Stewart

Senior Netball Coach