



The Bulldog Banter



MID JUNE UPDATE - PLANNING & PERFORMANCE (Brendan Sheehan)

It's my turn to step up with a report this edition and given that we are pretty much at the half way mark of our operating year now (if you include the pre-season period), there's plenty of data to report on, and lots of good news about FHC's year to date.

Strategic Plan: We have two and a half years to run on our Strategic Plan which is multi-componented - but emphasizes two key objectives – (1) the building of a sustainable Premier League Club model which is fueled by our own player recruitment, retention and development, and (2) the carrying out of that objective whilst remaining financially stable and strong. On the financial front, the detailed financial planning put in place by last year's Board has borne great fruit, with our budget being on track or ahead in almost every key financial area. Our bank balance is healthy and our financial commitments continue to be affordable and well managed.

In terms of the building of a sustainable Premier League Club (with both Men's and Women's representation), this is a challenge carried off in Victorian hockey only a few times over the last 50 years. Our hard work has seen many building blocks put in place in recent years, but we're now in the hands of Travis and Lachie, and their support teams, to complete the job over coming seasons.

Mens and Women's Sections: The mens and women's sections are again putting 18 senior teams (9/9) on the field each week, with relevant teams consolidating recent-year promotions, and smart strategy being employed with team performance versus young player development being carefully considered. The Clubs move away from using 'overseas' players, and the loss of other experienced players, has generally been used to introduce even more young players into our top teams, and FHC may well be fielding the youngest squads in both the mens and womens competitions.

Junior Section: Again the junior section is putting 250 children out on the park each weekend, with FHC being represented in all 'A' grade options, and our gender balance again showing an equal number of boys and girls. The immediate future is looking good for numbers as our Minkey program is flourishing (30 attending each week), our in-house Hook in2 Hockey program (U8's) competition is strong, and I believe that we have the largest U10 program in Victoria. A key problem facing our Club though is the need for more experienced players / coaches to help develop this talent. Our efforts will be somewhat wasted if we can't capture the full potential of these children because we don't provide quality coaching along their full journey.

Masters Section: We have more Masters sides on the park – 7 in total - than any other club, including a Men's and Women's 35A Grade. Having strong teams on the park week by week has

been difficult this year but this is also a reality of Masters hockey with the competition run on Monday and Wednesday nights. We're proud of the 20 plus Masters players who have been selected to play for Victoria at National Championships and those players who achieved selection in an Australian Masters side. However, we are facing a shortage in the 50+ section and we'll need to do some recruiting in the future as well as promote Masters hockey as a challenging and worthwhile 'next step' for those 35 year old players who are looking to enjoy a mid week game of hockey.

Finance: See the summary above. Congrats to all who are contributing to our volunteer-based enterprises - our Canteen and Hockey HQ, and well-done to all members who have magnificently supported our pay-before-you-play m'ship fee initiative. This has been a great winner for the Club.

Grounds and Pavilion: Colin Braithwaite is doing a brilliant job coordinating our facility maintenance and management tasks, and is driving the continuance of members being proud of the appearance of their Club's facilities. Congratulations to every Club member that contributes to the cleanliness and tidiness of our facilities, and watch out over the next month or so for several substantial capital works improvements about to take place at FHC.

Retail Operations: With the terrific support of Club members, and under the outstanding leadership of Mark, Nic, Marj, Lisa, and Bronwyn, our canteen and Hockey HQ continue to provide a magnificent service to members, and also turnover a handy little dividend for the Club. Remember that the canteen dividend each year (generally around \$40,000) continues to subsidise our fees, maintaining the FHC fees at around the lowest in Melbourne.

Sponsorship: Rod Johnstone (RJ) guides the Club's ever-growing s/ship program, whilst Darryl and Nicole lead the way with our innovative Premier League Squad s/ship programs. We have a reasonable port-folio of sponsors in all of these programs, but ambitious sporting clubs need to grow their partner programs. Contact any of the three Directors named above if you can tip them off to a potential new partner or opportunity.

Social: See social calendar details elsewhere in this Banter, but it's been a great win for the Club to capture Penny Mather as our new Social Director. A vibrant list of events is now in place, and they really deserve your support, so get along and participate in the Club and Penny's initiatives.

CANTEEN - THANK YOU AND NEWS

Thank you to all the members that assisted with the canteen, grill and coffee for the 2 country tournaments held in May and June. Without you it would not have been possible to feed the masses. Some members and parents have even doubled up!!!! It is always great to have a full roster for the busy time slots so that the burden doesn't fall on 1 or 2 volunteers.

Final Major Tournament for the Year- Junior State Championships. Under 13,15 and 17s – 1,2,3 and 4 July (school holidays).

Due to the clubs excellent facilities, and our outstanding reputation for warm and efficient service, the club has been selected to co-host these championships along with the State Hockey Centre. Our zone team (the Wildcats) will have a large number of Junior club players competing in these championships against all the other zones in Victoria . This tournament

will be a mammoth task to run with games starting at 8 am and ending at 9.30pm. All 6 Wildcats teams will be at Footscray on the Tuesday 1st and all girls teams back at Footscray on the Thursday. Finals are on the Friday. It is during school holidays so all members (including Under 18s ,uni students and those just having a break !!!!) would be welcomed to do a 2 hour shift (or more).

Please remember that any tournament is always a great chance to show off our club and the canteen sales are a way to keep playing fees low in comparison to other clubs.

[Click Here for Canteen Roster Times](#)

Contact details are below if you can nominate a shift.

Mark White 0416095761 Email: jwh90344@bigpond.net.au (Retail Operations)



WOMEN'S ROUND SAT 21ST JUNE

It is going to be a busy day with FHC celebrating our 80th birthday and also hosting H'Vic's Women's Round vs Altona. The FHC Women's Premier League & Reserves Teams will be wearing pink socks and hosting a "pink" themed afternoon tea.

As part of Women's Round, Hockey Victoria would like to celebrate and recognise the skills and abilities of our top female athletes, by awarding a Most Valuable Player medallion to one player from each of the WPL and WPLR matches. During the Premier League after noon tea at 4.00pm Hockey Victoria has asked Nicole Virtuoso to present the medal and the umpires for these matches will vote and advise Nicole the recipients. The Reserves medal will be presented after the game on the side of the pitch in front of the membership. FHC's life members Lynn Gale, Bobbie Speed, Lynn Muller, Heather Shaw, JA Sheehan, Nicole Virtuoso and Chris Henderson will be invited to attend to present a certificate of appreciation to a group of Women who have and continue to significantly contribute to the club on a volunteer capacity. President Rodney Johnstone will be in touch with the recipients this week to congratulate them and invite them to attend the afternoon tea from 3.30pm Sat 21st June.

FHC's 80th B'Day in 80's Style Party - Sat 21st June

FHC Members, Friends & Families are invited to our 80th B'day Party. Come one, come all dressed in your 80's best.

[FHC 80's Ipod Shuffle Play List](#)

FHC's 80's Birthday!

80's Ipod Shuffle Party & Disco
8pm Saturday 21st June
 \$20 Entry: 2 drinks & choice of Ipod Shuffle 80's song from the play list.
 Song playing at exactly 11pm wins Major CASH prize
 \$10 entry not dressed in 80's
 BBQ dinner, Drinks at Bar Prices, Keg, Cocktails, 80's Dance Off, Best Dressed Awards, Amazing 80's Activities
 Contact Penny to book & secure your 80's song 0459940555 penny.mathery1@hotmail.com
 Playlist on FHC website. First in best dressed.
 U18 \$20 Entry; BBQ, Softdrink, Ipod Shuffle 80's song

MEGA DRAW

Sunday 14th September 1pm - 3pm
Ticket holders receive complimentary beer, wine, soft drink and afternoon tea
Tickets \$100, over \$5000 in prizes
Contact Heather Shaw 0409173334
heather_shaw21@hotmail.com
to secure your ticket and number!

FHC IS NOW A SMOKE FREE VENUE

The board of directors has decided FHC will now be a completely smoke free venue. A smoking area and bins will be provided in the car park and signage will appear soon at all entry gates. We



thank all members in advance for your cooperation and if you can assist us in politely asking others to smoke outside that would be appreciated.



CONGRATULATIONS LIAM & HUGH

Federal Member for Gellibrand, Tim Watts MP, was down at the club at on Thursday 8 May evening to present Local Sporting Champions Grants. Among recipients of the grants are Footscray's Hugh Damnic and Liam Braithwaite. Congratulations.



RECOLLECTIONS FROM LIFE MEMBER ERIC THOMAS 1941

The Banter will be featuring recollections from past members in each edition. Eric Thomas was honoured with a life membership in 2004. His accolades include (TREASURER: 1943-47, VAHA DELEGATE: 1943-47, PRESS SECRETARY: 1945-47, SOCIAL TREASURER: 1948, U/AGE COACH: 1945-54, 57, 93 (produced 6 future mens club champions), VIC COLTS: 1946, MENS CLUB CHAMPION: 1945-1946). Eric is currently coaching at Kew hockey club close to where he resides.

WRITTEN BY ERIC THOMAS:

A few interesting things happened in the early days of the club. I am the only player left from my 1941 team. B2 Grade. Some players left their mark as standouts. Including Fred Page, Buck Sigley, Bob Blackbell. Ron Govan, Stan Govan, Jack Hull, Ken Yarwood, Bill Youell. All were top class players of those days. My second year found me selected in the A team (aged 16). Found the going tough as I was full back defending against fit grown men but got used to it and started retaliating with reasonable success. A few years later the club numbers dwindled to 10 members. Nine players and the non playing President. At our AGM we contemplated withdrawing the club and winding up the club. This was very upsetting to me as I loved hockey and also the Club atmosphere of fellow friendly players. At this stage Buck was secretary and I was treasurer. We voted to keep the club going with our diminished numbers of 9 players, Buck was voted in as Captain and remained Captain for many years after that. Buck and I managed to keep up the club spirit so as not to lose anybody. We won a game or two and managed a couple of draws. We actually had mostly experienced A grade standard players as stated above. A wave of excitement

happened when I recruited a work mate to have a game. We now had 10 players - yippee. We played at Camberwell but lost again. The recruit received a leg injury and that finished the recruit's only game. So back to 9 players again.

We had a Ladies club with us, called Footscray Central, they eventually disbanded through lack of numbers. There was also a Footscray Ladies club, which apparently ceased operations. Buck started up a boys u/age team. He viewed that juniors would help to build up the club. An excellent idea. I asked Buck if I could take over the team for the following year as coach. YES he said, and that reply marked the beginning of my 70 year coaching career. The teams did extra well.

One team practised every night after school and duly won the flag. It started off by me asking two boys to train the next night. Word got around about this session and 4 more turned up, and by the end of the week (Friday) the whole 11 turned up for a full scale practice. This went on until the end of the season. In one game the Kew opposition team did not want to lose by our "normal 10 goal score" and after travelling by train and tram we were met by Sam, the Kew manager with the walk over news. A measly 5-0 victory. The team members came from a small area in Kensington. We beat Essendon about 20 -0 . Our C/F scored most of the goals. The following week we played Ascot Vale who shared their ground with Essendon. It was obvious that Ascot vale would ask Essendon as to who scored the goals. Ascot Vale turned up at our Lynch's Bridge ground. So I changed our C/F to right wing and Right wing to C/F to put Ascot vale off the scent. Ascot vale put two players on our decoy C/F, (really our normal wing). He did not score during the first 5 to 6 minutes, which pleased Ascot Vale. I called out to the C/F (the decoy) to change to wing, and Wing to change to C/F. The Ascot vale players swarmed towards our Rt Wing, thinking that he was the mighty goal scorer against Essendon. Our C/F then went on to score goal after goal to give Footscray a massive score of 39 goals to nil. 35 minute halves were played in junior games back in those days. Probably an Aussie record.

Playing one Sat morning , a heavy fog blanketed the whole ground beside the river. actually the visible view was 15 m and once the play went further afield the only inkling of where the play was, was to hear the umpire's whistle. We most likely won that game as the team was just so unbeatable. One morning we were alerted about a body floating down the river. Police were standing watching but never attempted to jump into the freezing water to retrieve him, but our brave John Dalton stripped off his hockey shirt and boots and swam to the middle and dragged the man to the waiting police to the other side. We waited for our brave hero to return to resume the Hockey. There are plenty of stories of interest belonging to the F.H.C.. The history, rivalry, state players, and top umpires from Footscray. A great history and great club.

Eric Thomas



footscrayhockey.com.au