**PORT CLUB NOTES – 26 August 2017**

**PORT SENIORS AND STORM COLTS HAVE GOOD WINS**

A big crowd was at Cygnet last Saturday when the Cygnet ‘Community Bank’ Football Club hosted the first round of SFL Final matches. Although quite windy for most of the day, the forecast rain fortunately held off until all four games were over.

The Port Women kicked off the day in their First Semi-Final clash against the Hobart Demons, with the Demons proving too strong. The loss means that the Port Women’s season is now over, but what a wonderful achievement for the team in their first year of competition football and for many of the girls their first taste of Aussie Rules footy.

The next game saw the Southern Storm Colts take on New Norfolk with the Storm winning comfortably. The Reserves Elimination Final between Dodges Ferry and Hobart was a close affair all day, with Hobart holding on to win by two goals.

The final game of the day was the much-awaited Elimination Final contest between the Port and Dodges Ferry, with the home team coming back from a half-time deficit to hold on and win by eight points.

***Southern Storm Colts***

After three consecutive losses, the Southern Storm lads were keen to get on top of their New Norfolk opposition early and then be in a position to control the game. With key players Jack Brereton and Jack O’Neill out injured, several Storm lads shared the important ruck duties. Kicking with the breeze to the bottom end, the Storm were winning the early clearances and with Jake Dance and George O’Neill active up forward, moved out to a handy four goal lead at quarter time. The Storm’s strong desire and pressure football, which had been somewhat missing in recent weeks, was most evident in the second quarter, where they held their Eagle opponents goalless with the wind but managed to score a goal themselves to extend the margin to 31 points at half-time.

The Storm continued their strong, running team game in the second half, scoring three goals to one in the third quarter and their lead was out to eight goals. Not to be outdone, the Eagle lads battled the game out to the end, outscoring the Storm in the final quarter, but the Storm were able to head off the late challenge to win comfortably by 38 points.

In a very good team performance, better players for the Storm were George O’Neill (3 goals), Kyle Russell, Jake Dance (5 goals), Liam O’Neill, Josh Coad and Will Donato. The Storm’s other goal scorers were Elijah Reardon and Jake Munnings.

The Storm lads now head to Abbotsfield Park this Saturday to play top team, Hobart in the Second Semi-Final, with the first bounce at 9.15am.

***Port Seniors***

The Port were without the services of injured duo, Brayden Hayes and Mitch Direen, but welcomed back Captain, Rhys Jennings and Jeremy O’Neill for their important Elimination Final against the Dodges Ferry Sharks.

The Port struggled early and weren’t able to make full use of the strong wind advantage, while the Sharks were able to control their ball movement into the breeze, scoring two important goals to the scoreboard end. The Port lead by a single goal at the first break but this was never going to be enough with Dodges kicking with the wind in the second quarter. Despite the best efforts of Will Ford who took several strong intercept marks and Aaron Dance who won numerous possession, the Sharks piled on six goals to the Port’s three goals for the quarter and the visitors took an 11 point lead into half-time. To make matters worse, the Port had lost their big ruckman, Gerard Brereton, with a serious knee injury during the quarter.

With Coach, Ben Cato demanding his players be more accountable when defending and to move the ball much more quickly to their forwards, the Port slowly started to get the game back on their terms in the third term. Joe Direen was getting on top in the ruck, the on-ballers in Andrew Palmer and Sam Dean were getting more of the clearances, Matt Turnbull was providing strong contests at half-forward, while Ben Halton, Jeremy O’Neill and Ollie Burke finished off the good work up forward. A six goal to one quarter saw the Port take back the lead by 23 points at the final break, but would this be enough to hold off the Sharks!

Dodges Ferry continually attacked during the final quarter kicking three goals along with several behinds to narrow the lead to single figures and it was game on! A goal from Josh Halton steadied the Port ship, before a late goal to the Sharks just before the final siren reduced the final margin to 8 points in the Port’s favour, and the chance to continue their final’s run.

Will Ford was superb all day, marking strongly and repelling numerous Shark attacks, Aaron Dance continues to impress and played probably his best game for the season, while Joe Direen toiled manfully in the ruck and marked well around the ground. Andrew Palmer, Jeremy O’Neill (2 goals) and Ben Halton (6 goals) were other very good contributors. Ollie Burke and Josh Halton kicked two goals each while Sam Dean kicked one goal.

This week the Port will be up against Claremont at Abbotsfield Park in their First Semi-Final clash. The game is scheduled to start at 2.45pm.

***Port Women***

The Port Women played host to the higher placed North Hobart Demons in their knock out final, in what would be a tough contest as the Demon’s Women had developed into a very strong team over the season. The Port were pumped to get on the ground in front of a home crowd and do their best. The game started out a good battle, with Kara Geeves managing to convert the Port’s first major after a couple of tough, goalless weeks for the team. A great contested quarter from the Port Women playing in their first final as a group together and they were able to keep the margin at the first break to a minimal level.

In the second quarter the Demons managed to gain a larger lead and kept the Port under control. Brittany Woolley ended the season with another great game while Chantel Clark and Captain, Caitlin Phillips both battled hard all day and doing all they could to reduce the opposition’s damage.

The Demons continued to increase their lead after half time, but the Port continued to fight hard and play the game out proudly. Alina Williams played her best game of the year, along the back line and Kara Geeves again performed to her usual high standard. In the final quarter the Port managed to kick another goal, off the boot of Heidi Pettit who had a great game, also capping off a consistent season. However, the Demons proved too strong, running out 59 point winners.

A great and humbling experience for the ladies to play in front of a large home crowd in their final game of the year. The Port Women now look forward to the 2018 season.

***Port Best & Fairest Count***

Last Saturday the Club held their Best & Fairest counts for season 2017. Congratulations to Sam Dean (Senior B&F), Ben Halton (Synnott Brothers Award), Caitlyn Phillips (Women’s B&F), Shane Clark (Reserves B&F) and Peter O’Neill (Colts B&F) on their wins. All have had excellent seasons and are most deserving winners.

**GO THE PORT!!!!**