**FOOTY IS BACK AT KERMANDIE THIS SATURDAY**

It was a weekend of mixed results for the Port, with the Seniors and Southern Storm Colts scoring good wins over the Hobart Tigers but unfortunately the Reserves and Port Women went down to their Hobart and South East Suns opponents respectively.

The sun was shining brightly and the newly developed TCA oval was in perfect condition for the Senior and Reserve games in front of a large crowd of Tiger and Port supporters.

SENIORS

It was a real arm wrestle early as both the Port and Hobart midfields were winning their share of the centre breaks and inside 50’s, but scoring was at a premium. A two goal each first quarter had the Tigers ahead by two points at quarter time. The Port’s on-ball brigade started well with George O’Neill, Andrew Palmer, Ben Cato, Joe Direen and Toby Cowen all winning plenty of ball and Marcus Coulson was providing run from the wing. The Cygnet boys started getting the centre breaks and hitting their targets in the second quarter with Joe Direen marking well and kicking truly. The Port kicked four goals for the quarter but were also wasteful, kicking six behinds, to lead 44 to 22 at half time.

Whatever the Hobart Coach said at half-time certainly fired up his players, with Hobart running riot in the third term, getting on top in the centre clearances and kicking seven goals to the Port’s two and at the final change Hobart had regained the lead by 9 points, and the prospect of a nail-biting last quarter looked on the cards.

With Coach Ben Cato pleading with his players to take the game on, the Port boys rose to the challenge as they clawed back the margin with Ben Halton kicking three consecutive goals in no time and it was match on. With three minutes to play scores were locked at 85 apiece, but a late behind to Will Ford got the Port over the line by the narrowest of margins. Both teams had their opportunities with the Port having 20 more inside 50 metre entries and six more scoring shots, and fortunately on this occasion it was the Port’s turn to come out victors in what was a close and enthralling contest all day.

Young George O’Neill, playing his second game for the day was excellent and he was well supported by Will Ford and Cam Wilcox who both stood tall in defence. Andrew Palmer was a welcome inclusion coming back from injury, while young Jack Brereton rucked most of the day and is acquitting himself well in senior ranks. Joe Direen with 3 goals provided an excellent target up forward, while Ben Halton also finished with 3 goals (all in the final quarter). Captain Rhys Jennings and Marcus Coulson each kicked 2 goals while Will Ford and Jackson Gordon finished with single goals.

This Saturday the venue will be Kermandie where the fifth-placed Port will take on Dodges Ferry (6th), with the Seniors keen to consolidate their position in the SFL top five.

RESERVES

The Port Reserves were up against an undefeated Hobart team who had won their opening two games quite comfortably, while the Port were yet to get on the winning side of the ledger in their first three games. Hobart were quick out of the blocks and soon had five goals on the board while keeping the Port to a solitary goal in the first quarter. The second quarter was a repeat of the first, with another five to one goal quarter and the lead was out to 46 points at half-time, with the game effectively over.

Despite the Port’s best efforts, the Tigers were not going to let their foot off the throttle as they kicked five more goals in the third quarter while keeping the Port scoreless, followed by two more goals in the final quarter and the final score was 114 to 20 and a very comfortable win to the home team.

Better players in a rather disappointing team performance were Aaron Dance, Elliott Ross, Chris Stockfeld, Ben Smith, Brad Sculthorpe and Chris Coventry. The two Port goal scorers were Daniel ‘Fred’ Webster and Jack Brett.

COLTS

The Southern Storm, with six players unavailable, faced off against last year’s undefeated Premiers, Hobart with only 18 players, but were keen to test themselves against a quality opponent. The first quarter was closely contested with both teams working hard and finding scoring difficult. Both teams scored a goal for the term and the Hobart Tigers held a slender two point lead at the first break. The second quarter was more of the same but the Storm’s half-back line were stopping any Tiger forward entry and with a two goal to one quarter the Storm lead by a straight kick at half-time.

The Storm started to get their running game going in the third ‘premiership’ quarter and with everyone linking well together were able to get multiple entries into their forward line and find their Storm forwards. The Storm kicked five goals to the Tiger’s two for the term, to take a handy four goal lead into three quarter time. The final quarter saw Hobart kick three goals but with the Storm putting their foot down and kicking four goals of their own, they ran out victors by 30 points.

Will Polley continued his fine early season form and also kicked two goals, Noah Clifford continues to impress along with Josh Coad, Brayden Dowling, James Zietzen and Luke Ashlin who also is in a right vein of form. Others to hit the ‘big sticks’ were Connor Soward and Murray Bastick both with 2 goals, with singles to Josh, Noah, James, Cameron Walter, Jake Munnings and George O’Neill.

After four rounds the Storm are sitting on top of the Colts Ladder ahead of New Norfolk who are also undefeated. As Dodges Ferry don’t field a Colt’s side, the Storm lads have a well-deserved bye this weekend, and can rest up after a satisfying start to their season.

WOMEN

After losing by an average of 75 points in their three contests against the very experienced South East Suns last season, the Port Women were keen to assess their progress this year in the last game of the Gala day at Newtown Bike track last Sunday.

We came out pumped and ready and was the first on the board with Sheri Atkins-Collins just missing a major but put us on the board. The back line showed that they were going to be tough to get past, keeping the Suns scoreless in the first quarter, and the Port led by the solitary point. Serena Hubert was on fire again, not missing a mark and being all over the ground and helping the back line keep it out of the Suns scoring range. At half-time the Suns led 9 points to 1. Jess Burnett was playing a great game and putting herself on the line for the team, but unfortunately suffered an injury which finished her game. We hope she will be back soon.

During the break, Coach Renee spoke to the team about sticking to their players, moving out of the backline to allow full back Scotty (Keren Scotney) to kick out with options and talking to more to one another. Keen to continue Renee had the team back out on the field waiting for the Suns to return.

In the third quarter, the centre field took a hiding flip flopping the ball with the back line continuing to work hard and stop the many attempts by Suns and keep their score down.

The last quarter saw the Suns prove that their fitness was at a better level with the Port girls starting to slow down and the Suns were able to score a few more points to their tally.

The Port managed to keep the Suns to a low scoring game of 37 points to 1, which is a massive improvement from last year and every one should be very proud of their effort.

Welcome to Hayley Flakemore on her debut for Port, she made a great presence on the field. Better players on the day were Serena Hubert, Holly Upton, Michelle Cowen, Annaliese Dance, Keren Scotney and April Pottinger.

This week (Saturday 28th) we take on University at 10am as the opening game for the men.

Unfortunately Keren Scotney, who was to play her 100th game this week, has suffered an injury at work and may miss 6 – 7 weeks. The Port are so glad to have Keren in our team, with her insight into the game and wealth of knowledge she has helped the team grow and advising the coaches last year and this year. We wish Keren a speedy recovery and can’t wait for her to get back on the ground later in the season to play that 100th game.

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