**PORT CLUB NOTES – 13 April 2019**

Perfect weather and ground conditions greeted the players last Saturday with the Cygnet Oval in magnificent condition. The AFL would love to have this turf for their Marvel Stadium! Many thanks to the Huon Valley Council’s ground staff for the way the oval has been prepared.

It also saw the unveiling of the new electronic scoreboard, which was installed by Council in time for the Slab Road cricket finals. This is an exciting initiative for both our Clubs, providing excellent score visibility for both players and patrons, and for the promotion of our very generous Club sponsors.

Port Women

The Port Women ran out for an early start to their first home game of the season against University. The women were full of enthusiasm following their win the previous week. With three players out, they welcomed back Tia Duggan and Tara Slater and new team member Stacey Fox.

The first quarter was an even contest with both teams tackling and running well, and by the end of the quarter the Port women were pumped after goals from Mady Eaves and Stacey Fox. Into the second quarter, it was again a fairly even affair with lots of running and tackling from Tia, Tayla Clifford , Mady, Ash Munnings and Sammy Kluga. The Port although remaining scoreless for the quarter applied lots of pressure onto the fit Uni women who ran into open spaces. At half time the margin was seven points in University’s favour.

After half time the Port once again came out firing with renewed enthusiasm, and continued to  apply pressure and move the ball forward. Mady Eaves snagged another goal with Tameeka Coventry kicking well for her first goal of the season. Unfortunately Uni also kicked 2 goals for the quarter, so this meant that the Port were going into the last quarter still 7 points down.

The last quarter saw Uni continuing on with their running and tackling and adding another goal, while our women seemed to run out of puff only managing to add a single point to Uni’s one goal and a final margin of two goals. The scoreboard didn't reflect how well the ladies played, with some promising signs from new recruit Stacey Fox, awesome back line pressure from Emily Duggan who was supported well by Grace Lovell, Isabel Sharp, Tara Slater, Chantelle Coad, and Holly Upston. Once again great rucking and tackling from Tayla Clifford.

Best players in a good team game were; Stacey Fox (1 goal), Emily Duggan, Isabel Sharp, Tayla Clifford, Holly Upston and Mady Eaves (2 goals). Tameka Coventry was the other goal scorer.

Thanks again to our helpers Jason Kluga, Zac Richardson, Taylah Dillon, Emily Direen and Kerri-Lyn O'Neill. This week the Port Women travel to Abbotsfield Park, Claremont along with the Reserves and Seniors for a Good Friday game against Claremont starting at 10.15am.

Colts

The first quarter was an even affair with both the Storm and Dodges Ferry having difficulty getting their running, team games going. Will Polley was rucking well and giving his on-ballers first use of the ball. The Storm had several scoring opportunities but could only manage two goals from six scoring shots for the quarter, but it was enough to take a seven point lead into the first break. The second quarter saw the Storm kick a further two goals while their defence held firm, keeping their Dodges Ferry opponents scoreless, and the margin was out to 23 points at the long break.

After encouraging words from Coaches, Cam Ashlin and ‘Pup’ Lovell, the Storm came out for the second half full of run, moving the ball quickly to give their forwards Connor Soward (4 goals) and Murray Bastick (3 goals) every opportunity. The Storm’s accuracy returned with five goals straight for the quarter to Dodges’ three goals, but the Storm’s lead was now out to almost six goals.

Kayne Wouters, in his second game for the Storm, was showing all the skills and was in everything, and he was well supported by Reece Scotland, Cameron Slater and Brayden Dowling.

The final quarter was a similar story to the third, with the Storm booting four goals to one to run out comfortable victors by 53 points.

Others to hit the scoreboard were Harry Tolhurst, Bruk Duggan, Brayden Dowling, Cameron Slater, young Elijah Cowen and Blake Sculthorpe.

This week the Southern Storm Colts have a bye as Claremont are not fielding a Colts side this season.

Reserves

The Port Reserves started the game in fine form and were taking the game right up to their Dodges Ferry opponents. Three first quarter goals to the Port kept them in touch and the margin was only nine points in the visitor’s favour at quarter time.

The wheels fell off somewhat after the break for the Port team, with Dodges moving the ball quickly and streaming from defence into their forward area in waves, leaving the Port defence, lead well again by Tom Slevin, frequently outmanned. Dodges booted five goals to the Port’s solitary goal for the quarter and at half time Dodges led by 33 points.

At the break Port Coaches Jamie Direen and Rhys Jennings urged their players to take the contest up to the opposition and be more accountable. Brad Watson was leading by example, showing the determination and skills that won him five Senior B&F awards. There were some very positive signs with recent rugby converts, Carlos Rudolph and Josh Mayo applying pressure, tackling hard and winning the contested ball. Unfortunately the Port were not able to hit the scoreboard in the second half while Dodges continued to attack, scoring nine further goals to extend the final margin to 94 points.

Better players in a disappointing Port performance were Brad Watson, the ever-reliable Tom Slevin, Darcy Millhouse, Matt Coulson, Josh Mayo and Carlos Rudolph. Single goalkickers were Watto, Sean Burgess, Ben Smith and Ashley Hutchinson.

Seniors

The Port Seniors made four changes, following injuries to Elliott Ross (hamstring), Noah Clifford (shoulder) and with Matt Dance and Marcus Coulson both unavailable. Coming into the team were first-gamer Luke Ashlin, George and Peter O’Neill and Ollie Burke.

The Port started strongly to the town end and were soon on the board through goals to Ben Halton and Jake Dance, but scoring was difficult as both defences were holding out their opposition. Dodges Ferry’s key forward and ex-Lauderdale player Hooker was looking extremely dangerous every time the ball entered their forward line but Paddy O’Neill was manning up well. A three goal to two quarter saw the Port narrowly lead by three points at quarter time.

The second quarter saw Dodges start to get some forward momentum and fast ball movement which resulted in them kicking three goals to the Port’s one for the quarter, and they took an 8 point lead into the long break. The game was effectively won in the ‘premiership’ quarter, with the visitors regularly winning the centre clearances and banging on five goals while the Port, despite having quite a bit of the play across half forward, could only manage the one goal. The margin at three quarter time was 33 points and the Port needed to lift if they were to pull off the win.

An early goal to Dodges and the margin was almost 40 points, but to their credit the Port didn’t give up and when their running game finally clicked in, with Mitchell Direen and Braden Livingston breaking off half back, and with Joe Direen and Ben Halton providing big targets up forward, the Port stormed home kicking the last three goals of the game. Inaccuracy didn’t help the Port cause, with seven behinds for the quarter, and a final margin of 16 points.

Several youngsters in George O’Neill, Jackson Gordon, James Zeitzen, Nathan Duggan and Joe Direen all put in strong performances while Ben Halton was as busy and strong as ever, booting 3 goals. Jake Dance (2 goals) was the other multiple scorer with singles kicked by Toby Cowen, Braden Livingston and George O’Neill.

With almost half the team still under twenty years of age and with several new players in the mix, the future looks extremely bright for the Club, but it might take a little time for the team to gel and to learn the game plan. The team must quickly regroup before the Good Friday clash with Claremont at Abbotsfield Park.

Condolences

The Cygnet Football Club wishes to extend our sincere condolences to Brayden, Tanya and the Dowling family on the sudden passing late last week of their loved father and husband, David.

Our thoughts are also with David's sister and brother-in-law, Judy and Hugo Connor, great supporters and loyal volunteer of our Club.

The Southern Storm and Port players all wore a black armband last Saturday as a sign of respect for the Dowling family.

David's funeral will be this coming Saturday (20th April) at 10.30am at Hugo and Judy’s Pippin Hill, Connors Rd, Cygnet.