PORT CLUB NOTES: 27 April 2019

**BIG DAY FOR THE PORT AT KERMANDIE**

While the on-field results were not the way the Port had wished, last Saturday’s games at Kermandie were a huge success with some competitive football played in front of a very large and enthusiastic crowd. Many in the Huon had turned up simply to watch the Cygnet Legends and Kermandie Legends battle it out for the Kenny Pepper Cup.

Despite creeping age and a general lack of fitness, for many of the Legends crossing that white line and the challenge of the contest had not waned. The game was fiercely contested from the first bounce with Cygnet deciding to kick with the wind and taking the early lead. The game was effectively won in the second quarter with the Kermandie Legends, well coached by ‘Ballsy’ Kean, kicking five goals to Cygnet’s one goal and the home team held a 16 point lead at half-time.

After a short break, so that aging muscles didn’t cool down and seize up, the battle continued with the Port narrowing the margin to 10 points at the final break. With the strong wind at their backs, it was all the Kermandie Legends in the final quarter, as they booted three goals to nil to run out comfortable winners by 29 points. Kermandie also won the hamstring twinges contest, with six players affected to Cygnet’s one (which was done in the warm-up), and no doubt there were some very sore bodies and heads on Sunday morning!

For the victors, Warwick Ashlin booted 3 goals, H Brooks 2, with single goals to Cam Ashlin, Todd Pepper, ‘Pup’ Lovell and ‘Squid’ Gordon. For Cygnet, Andrew Jurd kicked two goals, with singles to Heath Dillon, Justin Polley and Brayden Hayes.

A great contest, well done to all involved.

COLTS

The Southern Storm Colts were host to last year’s Premiers, Lindisfarne in the Grand Final replay, and were keen to measure themselves against quality opposition. The Kermandie Oval was in good condition despite the recent rain, but the gusty wind would prove challenging for both teams. Fielding a full team for the first time this season, with George O’Neill, James Zeitzen, Luke Ashlin, Luke Paton and Noah Clifford returning from Senior duties, the Storm started strongly against the breeze, outscoring their opponents to lead by 4 points at quarter time.

The Storm really got their running game going in the second term, using the wind to advantage kicking five goals to Lindisfarne’s two goals to extend the margin to 22 points at half time. Injuries to key players George O’Neill (hamstring) and Noah Clifford (head knock) during this quarter ruled them out for the rest of the game, severely limiting the Storm’s interchange rotations.

The third quarter saw a reversal of the second with Lindisfarne kicking five goals to the Storm’s two goals and the difference was only 2 points at the final break. The last quarter started off badly for the Storm, with Lindisfarne kicking four quick goals against the wind to take the lead by 23 points. To their credit the Storm on-ballers dug deep and got their running game flowing and with long kicks started to hit the scoreboard. Despite kicking the last three goals of the game, the Storm came up 5 points short. A disappointing result, but importantly this should give the Storm lads confidence that they can match it with the best teams in the Colts competition.

Better players for the Storm were Luke Paton (2 goals), Josh Coad, Will Polley, Luke Ashlin, Blake Sculthorpe (2 goals) and Kade Francis. Other goal kickers were James Zeitzen 2, Murray Bastick 2, Liam Slater, Luke Ashlin, Harry Tolhurst and George O’Neill.

RESERVES

The Port Reserves, fielding one of their strongest teams for the year, started brightly against their Brighton opponents, winning the centre clearances but were unable to take any advantage of the strong wind, kicking the only goal for the quarter. The second quarter was an even affair with neither side able to break clear on the scoreboard. The Port defence, once again well lead by Mr Reliable, Tom Slevin, were repelling most of the Brighton attacking moves, limiting the visitors to one goal while the Port managed one goal against the wind and the difference was 3 points in favour of Cygnet at half-time.

The third quarter started with the Port making better use of the gusty wind, with Jack Brereton on top in the ruck contests and Jack Brett and Shane Clark throwing themselves into every contest. The Port booted three goals for the quarter while Brighton managed two of their own and the Port’s lead was 8 points with a quarter to play.

Unfortunately, Brighton seemed to lift after an early goal and with the wind advantage were continually entering their forward fifty area, putting pressure on the Port defence. The experienced Kane Nielsen was also playing well and a steadying hand across half back, while at the other end of the ground the Port were having difficulties getting it past half forward. Brighton finished the game strongly with three further goals to run out victors by 19 points.

For the Port, better players were Jack Brett, Shane Clark, Tom Slevin, Jack Brereton, Kane Nielsen (2 goals) and second gamer, Tarrin Hayers. The Port’s other goal scorers were Ben Smith, Shane Clark and Matt Dance.

WOMEN

The Port Women ran out onto the Kermandie Oval, to be greeted and cheered on by the huge crowd that remained following the Colts, Legends and Reserves games. The women were pumped but unsure of their opposition, the newly formed Brighton team, who were fielding several state players, with many other experienced players recruited from Lindisfarne and Claremont.

The first quarter saw Brighton score quickly, with the ball in their forward line constantly, keeping Emily Duggan on her toes, but she managed to save several goals. Brighton were quicker, bigger and showed off their skills well. By the end of the first quarter they had kicked 5 goals, 2 behinds while Port remained scoreless despite all their hard work. The second quarter was more of the same, with Brighton adding another 6 goals 1 behind.

But the Port women, in true fighting spirit never gave up, their pressure increasing as the game progressed, and by the end of the second quarter they were rewarded with a goal kicked by Taylah Dillon. This was the first time anyone had kicked a goal against Brighton, who had only conceded a total of 5 points in their first two games. The girls were pretty wrapped with their efforts and in the rooms at half time, coach Mark told the women how proud he was of them and reminded them to stick to the game plan. With Mark's words in their heads, the Port came out firing in the third quarter, with their tackling, running and pressure most impressive. While they remained scoreless for the rest of the game, the Port women played out the game full of confidence and self-belief.

Stacey Fox was once again impressive in the ruck, continuing her great form and winning most of the taps. As the Port's game improved, Brighton upped their physical pressure, but to our women's credit they matched them, despite several injuries. Abby Watson was once again a stand out with her tackling, until she took a high hit to the head. Serena Hubert had a cracker of a game, with her running and marking skills outstanding. Tara Slater and Isabel Sharp also contributed well, as did Captain Sammy Kluga, her running and quick hands across the centre saw the ball going forward only to be cut off by Brighton's defence.

Other outstanding players were Megan Wilkinson from Kingston who assisted Stacey in the ruck, as well as pocket rocket Ash Munnings, who despite getting several high and hard knocks from the opposition made a difference in the centre. Jess O'Neill, Holly Upston and Jaimie Noye all had solid games, despite having to play in many different positions due to injuries.

Once again the scoreboard didn't reflect how well the Port women played, going down to the very strong Brighton team by 99 points and only conceding 5 goals after half-time.

Thanks to all the helpers this week, team runner Jason Kluga, stats counter Zac Richardson, water carriers Amy Sharp, Jake Munnings, and time keepers Cooper and Phil.

THIS WEEK’S GAMES

This weekend both the Cygnet Seniors and Reserve teams have the bye round. Their next game will be against Lindisfarne at ANZAC Park on Saturday 11th May.

The only games for the Club this coming weekend will be the Southern Storm Colts who play Hobart under lights at the TCA Ground on Friday evening, starting at 6.30pm. Meanwhile, the Port Women will journey to North Hobart Oval where they will take on the North Hobart Demons at 2pm on Saturday.