**SEASON OVER FOR THE PORT AND STORM**

It was a disappointing but very proud day for the ‘Cygnet Community Bank Football Club’ as the Seniors and Southern Storm Colts unfortunately met their match against Claremont and Brighton in their respective Preliminary Finals last Saturday.

**COLTS**

The Southern Storm boys, after going down narrowly to top-team Claremont in overtime in their Second Semi-Final, were again matched against the Brighton Robins.

It was an even first quarter with both teams having five shots on goal, with Brighton’s three goals to two giving them a five point lead at quarter time. During the quarter, Joe Direen kicked his 100th goal for the season, a fantastic effort and the only player in all three SFL competitions to reach triple figures. The second quarter was another even affair with both teams adding two goals and it was only a one goal margin in Brighton’s favour at the half-time break.

It was all Brighton in the third ‘premiership’ quarter as they piled on six goals straight whilst restricting the Storm to a single goal, and increasing their lead to 33 points with a quarter to play. In the last quarter, Brighton were able to match every Storm’s effort to get back into the game, but the damage had already been done, and Brighton booked their place in the Grand Final with a 35 point win. Both teams had 19 scoring shots for the game, but Brighton’s superior accuracy (thirteen goals to six) proved the difference.

Storm Best and Fairest winner, Nathan Duggan continued his fine season with another outstanding performance. He was well supported by Kyle Russell, Will Donato, Jack Brereton, Peter O’Neill and Elijah Reardon, while Joe Direen was the only multiple goal scorer with two goals, and singles to Sean Burgess, Jackson and Bailey Gordon and Jack Bester.

After not fielding a Colts team last season, coaches Matt Brereton and Squid Gordon, together with their able assistants Adam Wills and Leigh Savage, have done an excellent job in developing the young Storm into a cohesive team and have them playing an excellent brand of football. The future of the Southern Storm looks extremely bright, given that several players tasted senior football this season and the majority of the boys will still be eligible to play under 18’s next season.

**SENIORS**

Heavy drizzle and slippery conditions greeted Cygnet and Claremont as they lined up for their Preliminary Final clash and the right to play Lindisfarne in this week’s SFL Grand Final. Cygnet were without Brayden Hayes, Brad Watson and ‘Rat’ Cane but welcomed back Gerard Brereton, Paddy Verrell and Loic Auderset for this ‘do or die’ clash.

Claremont kicked to the Horrie Gorringe Stand end in the first quarter and did most of the attacking, but fortunately for the Port their opponents were inaccurate, scoring one goal only from seven scoring shots. At the other end the Port scored a solitary behind for the quarter from limited opportunities, given Claremont a two goal lead at quarter time. A couple of early goals in the second quarter from Shane Clark tightened up the contest and it became a real arm wrestle in very trying conditions. Cygnet scored two further goals for the quarter, including an excellent snapshot on the run from Toby Cowen while Claremont scored three of their own, and the score was all tied up at 33 points apiece at half-time. The Port’s change rooms were packed as members and supporters came in to listen to the Coach’s messages and to encourage the boys to continue playing pressure football.

Claremont started to get their running game going in the third quarter and the Cygnet back six, led magnificently by Cam Wilcox, were under constant pressure, while the Port was finding scoring difficult. A four goal to two quarter had Claremont with their noses in front by two goals with a quarter to play. As playing conditions further deteriorated with the constant rain, both sides were having difficulty getting clean possession and with the worsening slippery conditions it became a real slog. Most of the play in the final quarter was in Claremont’s forward area but the Port’s determined defence stayed firm right to the end, restricting Claremont to only two goals for the quarter despite numerous forward thrusts. In the end the margin was too great for the Port to bridge, with Claremont running out victors by 20 points.

It was a real team effort from the Port with no player shirking the issue and all were completely spent after the game. Cam Wilcox was superb all day and held the SFL leading goalkicker, Salter to one goal scored late in the final quarter, while young Toby ‘Logger’ Cowen showed what a great footy future he has. ‘Sticks’ Clark (2 goals), Ben Halton, Gav Quirk and Grant Clark were all very good contributors. Special mention must go to captain, Rhys Jennings, who gamely played out the final two quarters with a jaw fractured in two places. Rhy’s determination and grit to continue to put his head over the ball despite his injury really showed the true Port spirit.

In a game where goals were extremely hard to come by, Shane Clark and ‘Pud’ Darcy both kicked two goals, with singles to ‘Logger’, Corey Shaw, Jason Laycock and Gav Quirk.

The Cygnet Football Club has certainly come a long way in the past year, from wooden spooners in 2015 (and 2014), to competitive preliminary finalists twelve months later. The Club is extremely proud of the efforts of Coach Gav Quirk, his assistants and all the Port players who have shown a strong commitment to rebuilding the Club and continuous improvement as the season has progressed. Several of the Storm’s young men were given senior playing opportunities during the season and all acquitted themselves very well. With most of the current players expected to play on in 2017 the future looks very bright for the Club as several past players, who have been working or travelling interstate or overseas, have also expressed a keenness to pull on the Port jumper again. Watch out for some exciting recruitment announcements during the off season.

**ANNUAL DINNER AND TROPHY PRESENTATION (15th October)**

Don’t forget the Annual Dinner and Trophy Presentation will be held on Saturday 15th October. Further details will be provided on our Port Cygnet Football Club Facebook page and on the Club website (cygnetfc.com.au).

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