**CYGNET COMMUNITY BANK FOOTBALL CLUB - ‘THE PORT’**

**Message from David O’Neill, President**

The 2016 season was a watershed season for the Cygnet Community Bank Football Club, with significant progress on several important fronts.

Firstly, the Club was able to show our players and football community that we believed we had a future by investing in the construction of modern change rooms with gym and medical facilities. To achieve what we did with a grant of $80,000.00 from the Department of Sport and Recreation was a massive achievement for the club and Cygnet community. We now have a valuable asset at our disposal that will serve us well into the future. The Club thanks all players, sponsors and supporters who donated time, materials and cash to this project, especially our tradies who made all the difference in how far we were able to value add and progress this project. Importantly, the project was fully completed on time and within budget.

Our Past Players Committee and junior club Southern Storm came to the rescue to jointly fund the carpet when our own finances were exhausted and it is great to see our past and our future coming together to give the senior club such support. If we continue to work together and support each other our small remote club can survive and have success in the SFL.

On the subject of success, it is usually measured by how competitive the senior team is on the field, to be able to play finals and ultimately to win a premiership. In recent years, the Cygnet Football Club had languished near the bottom of the ladder with little success and no finals action, so it was a great achievement to finish third in 2016 and to put in a solid performance against eventual premiers Claremont, in the Preliminary Final. It was great to welcome several local boys back to the Club last season and very exciting that several more have signed on to play with The PORT this coming season.

Possibly the most important front our club progressed in 2016 was fielding a very competitive Under 18 Southern Storm team. Having senior on-field success has revived a positive feel to the club but equally important is having junior players around the club to demonstrate that we also have a bright and successful future if we can be good role models and able to develop our youth to continue playing reserves and senior football.

It was a huge honour for the Cygnet Football Club to be named the inaugural SFL Community Club for 2016 for its support and association with Therese Donohoe over some 40 years. In truth it should have been awarded to Therese as she has given much more to The PORT than she has received from our club. This award highlights what community and grassroots football is all about and how important it is to keep local football in small communities.

The PORT will continue to strive to be bigger and stronger, so I encourage all our loyal supporters and sponsors to really get behind the Club and players as we commence this 2017 season.

**Ben Cato to Coach ‘”The PORT” in 2017**

Former Cygnet, Clarence and Richmond (Old Scholars Football Assoc.) player and coach, Ben Cato, has been appointed as the Port Senior Coach for the 2017 season. Cato was born and bred in Cygnet and stated he had always wanted to play for his former home team, where he played junior football in the Mini-League through to Under 15’s. He relocated to Hobart to play with the Tassie Mariners Under 16 program and also joined the powerful Clarence Football Club, establishing himself as a regular senior player and winning a premiership with the Roos in 2006.

In 2009, Ben moved to Old Scholars Association Club, Richmond as Assistant Coach and was appointed Senior Coach in 2011, losing the Grand Final in his first year at the helm. He coached Richmond again in 2012 and other than a short stint back at Clarence, remained at Richmond as a player through to 2016.

Cato stated that he was really excited about his new Cygnet coaching role, “I want us to pick up and improve on where we got to last season and ensure the boys understand that opportunities to play finals do not come around often - it does not just magically happen - but requires even further hard work and fitness to get into a top three spot again from where you can really launch a strong finish to the season”.

Ben believes in players following their roles and direction, but believes delivery of those messages is the key to getting the best from everybody. ‘’I have my own defined coaching style – I’m not a ‘’screamer’’ so to speak – it is all about working for each other; identifying where we may be letting ourselves down, and ensuring we correct any deficiencies in our game plan and structure”.

Cato stated if the sponsors, members and supporters thought that the Port were a great outfit to watch last season, he encourages everybody to get on board for what he describes as a super-exciting time for the Club. ‘’We are in a once in a life-time football opportunity window, they open and shut quickly, so the challenge is there before us; it is up to us collectively as a Club to deliver’’.

**Player Gains and Losses for Season 2017**

Gains:

Ben Cato (Richmond OSFA), Tom Nichols (North Hobart/Overseas), Josh Halton (Kingborough), Rhys Synnott (Overseas), Andrew Palmer (Overseas), Chris Stockfield (Channel), Marcus Coulson (Kingborough), Chase Connelly (Goldfields Football League), Jacob Hayers (Kingborough), Ryan Panton (Channel), Jeremy O’Neill (Huonville), Mark Bradley (Retirement), Riley Surendra-Nicholas (STJFL)

 Losses:

Gavin Quirk (New Norfolk), Jason Laycock (New Norfolk), Jacob Brereton (Alexandra, AFL Yarra Ranges), Toby Cowen (Kingborough), Pat Wilcox (Huonville), Aiden Geeves (Huonville)

**PORT’S Reserve Coaches – Ollie Burke and Matty Whitehouse**

Popular players and club-men, Ollie ‘Herb’ Burke and Matty Whitehouse have been appointed co-coaches of the Port's Reserve side for the 2017 season. Both bring a huge amount of football experience to the role, with both playing senior level football at the Kingborough Tigers and for the past few years at the Cygnet Football Club. Ollie also played with former kindred club, Kermandie before it folded.

Since arriving at The PORT, both have been hugely popular and entertaining figures, loved by their team mates and always willing to chip in and help around the club, especially donating time during the construction of the new Clubrooms. Both ‘Herb’ and Matty had injury-interrupted seasons in 2016, and both are looking forward to more game time in 2017.

They are keen to build on the foundations set by former Coach, Shane Clark, over the past few years, with the Reserve team narrowly missing out on the finals in 2016. Their goals in season 2017 are to create an environment where the team is consistently competitive, where players enjoy their football and creating important depth within the club so that players are ready to step up into the senior team when required.

**Southern Storm Colts Coaches – Matt Brereton and Tyler Cowen**

Matt Brereton will again take on the coaching duties with the Southern Storm Colts in season 2017, where he will be ably assisted by former Colt’s coach and Cygnet player, Tyler Cowen.

Matt’s football abilities and playing achievements with both North Hobart and Tasmania are well known and his ability to manage young players really came to the fore in season 2016 with his efforts, along with Donald ‘Squid’ Gordon, in almost guiding the Storm boys to a maiden Grand Final appearance. This result was particularly commendable given the club was not able to field a Colts team the previous year due to a shortage of players. ‘Squid’ has reluctantly stepped down as his son Bailey begins his journey into the elite Mariners program, and this requires much travel and commitment as a parent.

Tyler has previously coached at the Colts’ level under the Cygnet banner, during a particularly hard time when the Club could often only muster 12-14 players each week, and was frequently seeking assistance through the Mini-League Under 15’s to double up. During these testing times, Tyler impressed the Club with his ability to address the players and their competitiveness, although still at a very young age himself. Tyler has stated that he is looking forward to working closely with Matt and having him as a mentor to progress his coaching career.

The Storm boys are in great hands with Matt and Tyler who will continue to nurture the immense talent in the area, particularly given that most of young men who played in the 2016 team are still eligible to play Colts this coming season. Given their exposure last year, they are going to be a mighty force this season and hopefully the next step to aspire to will be a Grand Final spot come September.