**SENIORS & SOUTHERN STORM INTO FINALS**

The script was perfect last Saturday when the Port Cygnet Football Club played host to the New Norfolk Eagles in a must win match for the Seniors to play finals with the Colt’s and Reserves also looking to record victories in front of a big crowd and a number of past players with the Club holding its annual reunion on the day.

**Colts**

Saturday saw the Southern Storm playing at home against ladder leaders New Norfolk. In drizzly and slippery conditions the Storm boys came out full of running and determination. They quickly put on 2 goals and another before the end of the quarter. Their teamwork and support for each other was a real feature of their play. The second quarter continued in the same way with Storm able to find the goals twice to finish the half with a good lead of 33 to 10.

After the break, the teamwork and support from the Storm boys helped keep New Norfolk goalless until the last quarter.  The backline was outstanding but the pleasing aspect from the coaches point of view was the pressure applied by all the team over the ground.

Lukas Ford was continuing his best of ground performance from last week, ably supported by Noah Clifford who chimed in with two goals.

They say a week is a long time in footy and so it turned out to be. The Storm boys put their lacklustre performance last week aside to run out a good win against a quality side.

This sets up a great first final against Lindisfarne next week where the Storm will be looking to reverse their previous meeting result.

**Reserves**

The Reserve side finished the season on a positive note in a come from behind win against the Eagles.

New Norfolk took the lead in the first half, leading by 22 points at the half time break due to superior team-work and avenue to goal. Cygnet seemed slow and out of touch and was missing the ball winning ability of Matthew Coulson who missed the match.

Cygnet lifted their intensity after the long break with three goals in the third quarter. In the final tem with the crown right behind them, the boys kicked another four goals to run over the Eagles for an impressive win after a pretty tough season generally. Julian Direen, Jack Bester and Jack Brett were busy all day for the Port. Ollie Burke, Jack Bester, Chris Stockfeld and Jack Brett all kick two goals for the Port which made all the difference to the final result.

The backline held the visitors to just one goal in the second half which was a major factor in the fantastic victory. Aaron Dance, Brad Sculthorpe and Chris Coventry all made solid contributions in that stymied the Eagles forwards. Well done to Coaches Matthew Whitehouse and Ollie Burke who despite being short on numbers a number of times, still made it a very enjoyable season for all involved.

**Seniors**

The senior match commenced in fine conditions. There was much anticipation as the Port had so much to play for. A big crowd was present for the Cygnet Past Players and Supporters function which provided further support to all teams.

The game was very even in the first quarter with the midfields of both sides starting well. Both sides were sharing the centre clearances and the inside 50’s. It was the Port who made the most of their opportunities in this quarter opening up a three-goal lead at the first break. Goals in the quarter went to Jackson Gordon, Ben Halton, Toby Cowen and Elijah Reardon.

The second quarter saw the close contest of the midfields continue, with neither team giving an inch. The heat of the contest was evident as tempers flared due to the high stakes on a number of occasions during this quarter. The Port got their running game going providing their forwards with plenty of inside 50’s. Unfortunately, the delivery was very wasteful making it hard for the forward’s to capitalise on those opportunities.

Young gun Elijah Reardon became a focal point up forward in the second quarter, presenting over and over again with very clean hands. During this quarter the defenders of the Port were under some serious pressure, but held together well. New Norfolk however made the most of their forward thrusts scoring 5 goals and maintaining touch with the Port going into half time

Goals in the second quarter went to Joe Direen (2), Ben Halton and Jake Dance.

After the long break, Coach Cato moved big Joe Direen move into the ruck which had an immediate impact. The midfield of the Port were on top within the third quarter as Toby Cowen, Rhys Jennings and Andrew Palmer dominating the centre clearances and helping the Port win the inside 50’s.

Unfortunately, once again the delivery into the forward line of the Port was not great making it very tough for the forwards. While the Port managed 4 goals and 4 behinds for the quarter – New Norfolk again made the most of their limited opportunities to score 5 goals straight. As a result the Eagles were able to finish the quarter less than 2 goals behind making for a great finish. Goals in the third quarter went to Ben Halton, Elijah Reardon (2) and Will Ford.

At three quarter time, Port coach Ben Cato pleaded for more from his team with their season on the line. This seemed to work as they started the quarter well. Once again the Port dominated the centre clearances and inside 50’s. The midfield brigade of the Port continued to dominate play and the forwards were able to convert. In what was a great tussle – the Port finally prevailed.

In a best on ground display, Ben Halton was his usual dominant self both in the forward line and in the midfield, kicking three goals and stepping up when the Port needed him the most.

Jackson Gordon was solid in defence and created plenty of run off the half back line. Toby Cowen dominated the midfield – providing plenty of run and forward thrusts. Andrew Palmer continued with his rich vein of form, providing plenty of run out of the midfield. Both Palmer and Rhys Jennings continue to stand up when the Port need their captains the most. Elijah Reardon provided plenty of spark on the forward line, kicking 4 goals and thriving under immense pressure.

George O’Neill continues to thrive within the senior side. With plenty of run on the wing and within the midfield and immense pressure provided by each of the one percenters, George provided plenty of impact on the game.

Goals in the final quarter went to Elijah Reardon, Will Ford and Andrew Palmer in a fantastic team effort.

**Past Players Reunion**

The Cygnet Past Players held their annual get together on the last round of the home and away roster when the Port & Storm took on New Norfolk. There was a good turnout of 100 patrons to sit down to homemade soup and a roast meal catered for by the Top Pub. Tony Marchant was our guest speaker and we thank Tony for an entertaining insight to his football career and for donating his time and effort. Brendon Connell also spoke on Colin Bellchambers as did ‘Tidsy’ Smith on Noel Wilson, both champions of our club who passed away recently.  We thank our Past Players Committee for organising a great day, made even more enjoyable by the great effort by our three teams to all record victories over a formidable opponent in the New Norfolk Football Club - a great effort by all involved including all volunteers on the day.

**This Weeks Finals**

This week the Southern Storm venture to Abbotsfield Park to play Lindisfarne in a Qualifying Final commencing at 9.30am. The Seniors will face Dodges Ferry at Shark Park in an Elimination Final commencing at 2.00pm. We hope a large contingent of supporters travel to Claremont to cheer on our young boy’s then continue down to Shark Park to provide encouragement and support to our Senior team to keep their finals hopes alive! Supporters & players can ask for a pass to the Dodges match if they attend the Storm’s game at Claremont – meaning you only pay once!!

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