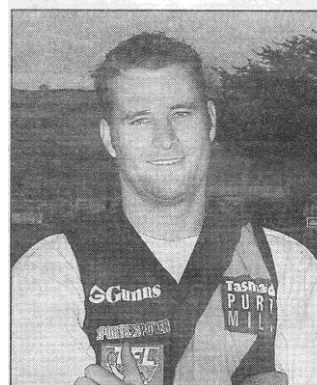


2006 Back to the Yarra Valley

Season 2006 began with Alexandra back playing in the Y.V.M.D.F.L where they last played in 1985 before going to the Tungamah League. The Yarra Valley League had Seniors, Reserves and Under 18 football competitions in Second Division where Alexandra were fixture to play. The Yarra Valley had only recently become involved in the netball scene and only five clubs apart from Alexandra and Thornton Eildon had netball teams in A and B grade. Alexandra junior players fewer than 15s, Under 13s, and fewer than 11s were now playing both football and netball in the Seymour and District Junior Football Netball League.

The Alexandra Football Club was still overseen by President Ray Steyger and Secretary David McLaurin and Dean Murdoch had joined the executive as Treasurer.



Alexandra had appointed Central Goulburn and Alexandra best and fairest winner Michael Bretherton as coach for 2006...

A new League, new Coach, a couple of new players, new jumpers (thankfully, I could never get to like that last one) but some things remained the same as we travelled to Thornton for the start of a new season starting on April 8th.

Alex. started slowly allowing Thornton Eildon to gain the initiative and lead at the first change. Both sides could only manage two goals each in a tight second quarter with the defences on top. The third term was similar but Thornton Eildon were wasteful up forward as they led by 11 points at the last change. The trend of the game remained the same in the last quarter in a game that never reached any great heights and only retained the crowd's interest because of the relative closeness of the scores. Alex 7.6.48 lost to T.E. 8.18. who retained the Barry (Sprague) Thompson trophy. Best: T.O'Shea, C.Jack, S.Rowan, Paul Francis, J.Heyes C.Mullins was the only multiple goalkicker with two.

After the break for Easter, Alex. were host to the Yarra Glen F.N.C for the first time. Yarra Glen were not a member of the YVMDFL during our previous involvement. Alex. began well with five goals to four in the first qtr but then had a ten goal second quarter to take control of the game. Alex continued to increase their lead as the second half progressed, running out 110 point winners 27.10 to 9.8. Haggis with eight goals led the way with S.Rowan (1) T.O'Shea, G.Steiner C.Mullins (5) and C.Jack (2) listed as best players. J.Heyes and N.Oakley were also amongst the goals with 3 each.

Steve Hedger played his 250th game this day leading his side to a big win. James Kidd kicked 7 goals in this game. The U18s started the day well also winning easily

The Alexandra FNC opened their new Netball court and surroundings this day and celebrated by winning both games easily.

Alex. ventured into the Mountain District for the first time as they travelled to Sth Belgrave for round 3 on April 29th. It was a strange situation with the opposition supporters etc also all decked out in red, white and black. Alex started tentatively on the small ground but worked their way to a two point lead by half time. Alex improved as the game progressed and but for some inaccuracy up forward would have had the match wrapped up earlier. Alex 16. 20. eventually defeated last year's beaten grand finalists 14.14. New player Stephen McKeon impressed with six goals whilst G.Steiner (4), C.Mullins C.Jack, T.O'Shea and another newcomer Joe Mount was best. Ben Van Lierop kicked 6 goals in the Reserves come from behind win.

Alex were next at home to undefeated leader Warburton M on a cold early May day. With new player S.McKeon impressing the local supporters Alex. got away to an early lead surprising the visitors. Alex were hard at the ball with T O'Shea and L.Ware the standouts but the recently relegated visitors came back to lead at half time. Three goals each in the third qtr. left the game up for grabs in the last quarter but the visitors with man mountain captain -coach Vin Muccitelli who had kicked 41 goals in three games, leading the way Warburton M maintained the break as Alex. struggled to kick goals at the hill end. Alex. 9.6 to W.M. 12.16. Best: M.Bretherton, J.Blakeney, C.Mullins, S.Kidd, T.McKinlay, .T.Dunell. S.McKeon 5 and W.Haggis 3 were most effective up forward.

Alexandra's next trip was to Seville to renew acquaintances with "the potato chip" Players who had never been to Seville could hardly believe their eyes. Alex. began well with another new player Adam Merrington impressing up forward led at the first two changes. A strange umpiring decision left Alex. short in the big man area as Chris Mullins was sent off in the second qtr. which assisted the home side to take the lead at the last change and go on to a five goal win. 16.5 to Alex. 11.5. Incentive Awards: B.Kidd, J.Heyes, N.Oakley, C.Jack, A.Merrington.

Alexandra next travelled to Emerald but to a different venue to our previous visits in the eighties and proved far too good for the bottom placed Bombers. Alex. had a number of new faces into the team and they were keen to impress. Len Jenkins had one of his days out kicking 8 goals and Wayne Haggis bagged 6. Others to impress were N.Oakley (2), B. Kidd, S.Rowan J.Heyes whilst C.Jack kicked three goals. Alex 22.22 def Emerald 3.5. B.Heard kicked 5 goals in the Reserves big win.

Back home after two away trips Alex. looked forward to the test against third placed Yarra Junction on May 27th. The Rebels were led on to the field by club legend George Steiner playing his 200th game for the club since coming to the town in 1994. Truly a remarkable effort. Co-incidentally, Yarra Junction was one of the clubs that George coached prior to coming to Alexandra and some of his old team-mates (all retired) attended to help this most respected player celebrate. The game started with both sides hard at the ball and Alex holding a narrow lead at quarter time but Yarra Junction stepped up the pace in the second qtr with 7 goals to 1 to grab the initiative. Alex won the second half but the damage had been done giving the visitors a 20 point win 14.7 to 11.5

M.Bretherton, C.Jack, T.Dunell, C. Mullins, N.Oakley L.Ware. W.Haggis 4 goals. Young Reserves player Ross Cavill kicked 6 goals a good Reserves win.

Badly needing a win to keep in the finals contest, Alex. were home to second placed Thornton Eildon after the break for an Interleague game. Alex. made five changes to the team that hit the ground running. An accurate Alex went to a 8point lead at the first change and in a tight second term increased that margin by a goal as the sides broke for the half time break. Alex. who were hard at the contest won the game in the third quarter and took a 29 point lead into the last qtr. Determined not to let the advantage slip Alex. continued their superiority to win 13.4 to 7.13. Best: B.Kidd, C.Mullins, M.Bretherton, C.Jack, L.Ware, J.Mount. S.Rowan and G.Steiner were effective with 3 goals each. Brian Ward played his 150th game in a winning reserves team earlier in the day.

Alexandra's first ever trip to Yarra Glen for round nine resulted in a comfortable win against the improving Yarra Glen team. Alex. got away to a good start and seven goals in each of the second and third quarters set up a comfortable win 22.6 to 13.6 despite being outscored by the home side in the last qtr. Best: R.Cavill (3), C.Jack, B.Kidd, N.Oakley (1), W.Haggis (5) M.Bretherton (3). At the half way mark of the season Alex were in third place on the ladder with five wins.

Alexandra were home to the other Red, White and Black team Sth Belgrave for round 10 on June 24th. The visitors jumped Alex. who appeared flat after successive wins and gave away undisciplined frees and 50m penalties. Alex fought back to within a goal in the last quarter but Sth Belgrave held on to win 16.11 to 14.11. This was a game Alex, should not have lost and could not afford to lose home games to teams beneath them on the ladder. Best: C.Mullins, N.Oakley, C.Jack (3), Bretherton, B.Kidd, T.Dunell. James Kidd kicked 6 goals in the Reserves big win. Alexandra ventured to Warburton for the first time since 1985 when Geoff Hortin's 5 goals led the Rebels to a win. On this occasion a win looked out of reach from very early on in the game as the home side led by 6 goals + at the main break. The Alex. defence held the unbeaten team to two goals in the third quarter but unfortunately were unable to score at the other end. The home side kicked goals from all angles (10) at the river end in the last to win 25.19 to 9.3. Best: C.Mullins, T.Dunell, M.Bretherton, N.Oakley, J.Krijt, S.Rowan.

After consecutive losses, Alex. had lost fourth place to Sth Belgrave so needed a win against the visiting Seville to get back into contention. This assignment did not start as planned as the Blues kicked the first three goals of the game. Despite winning the second quarter Alex still trailed by 13 points at the big break. Alex seemed to be waiting for someone else to provide the spark but it never came and in a low scoring second half Seville kept in front winning 9.9 to the home side's 6.10. Best: S.Kidd, M.Bretherton, J.Mount, B.Kidd, L.Ware, J.Heyes. W.Haggis kicked half of the goal tally. The Reserves had their biggest ever win against Seville by 202 points with Darryn Embling kicking 8 goals and James Kidd 5

Despite having to make four changes, Alexandra proved far too good for bottom side Emerald at the Showgrounds in Round 13 on July 15th. Alex. started with 7 goals to take control and finished off the game with 10 in the last qtr. W.Haggis and L.Jenkins with 6 goals each and Ross Cavill 5 finished off the work of the mid-fielders whilst the defence led by Brad Kidd and Lucas Russell was solid all game. Wayne Sweatman was also amongst the best players as was Jason Krijt and Scott Rowan (3).

Alexandra's next trip was to Yarra Junction where a win was a must if they were to keep their finals hopes alive. This task was made more difficult by the unavailability due to injury of many regular names. The first half was close with the Rebels holding a 5 point lead at half time but the third quarter was where the home side won the game. Alex. won the last qtr. but could not bridge the gap, falling 11points short 11.13 to 13.12. Best: G.Steiner (4), J.Mount, C.Mullins, N.Oakley, B.Kidd, C.Jack.

Further injuries handicapped Alexandra's chance in the second visit to Thornton for the year. Despite this the depleted Alex side without Bretherton, Francis, Haggis, McKeon and others kept within a kick or so of the home side who were more accurate in front of goal 16.7 to 13.13.. It was a typical Alex V Thornton clash with plenty of weight being used keeping the big crowd vocal. Best: J.Blakeney, C.Mullins, L.Heard (6), B.Kidd, C.Jack, S.Kidd.

The Reserves who were in third place and were sure to play finals, had a big win with P.Brooks kicking 6 goals.

After two away games, Alexandra were back home for round 16 to Yarra Glen who advise the club early on the Saturday morning that they were having to forfeit the Thirds and Reserve games. It soon became apparent that the visitors were also below full strength as Alex put on 7 and 10 goals respectively in the first two quarters and finished up 139 point winners 30.13 to 8.6. C.Jack (1) S.McKeon (10), N.Oakley (2), J.Kidd, L.Jenkins (6) L.Collard (2) were listed as best.

After Thornton's loss to Sth Belgrave Alexandra made their final away trip to South Belgrave needing to beat the fourth placed team and hope results went their way in the last round 18. The ground was heavy but Alex. adapted to the conditions quickly to have a handy lead at the first change. The home side with a 10 goal second term raced to a 40 point lead at half-time. Alex. reversed the trend of the game in the third qtr. to get back to within a couple of points at the last change. The last quarter was goal for goal with the home side looking the winner with minutes to go. Goals to McKeon and Jenkins got Alex back to within six points before Jenkins snapped Alex's 17th and his sixth goal just before the siren resulting a drawn game 17.11 to 16.17. Best: L.Jenkins N.Oakley (4) L.Ware, S.Rowan, C.Jack.

Alex were at home to Warburton Millgrove for the last H&A game of the season. The unbeaten visitors started well but the Rebels fought back to lead by the narrowest of margins at the main break. The "Burras" feeling challenged, responded in the third quarter to hold a three goal break at the last change. Alex again outscored the premiersip favourite's to the town end but Warby always were going to win as they did 12.14 to 10.12.

Reflecting after an interesting first season back in the Yarra Valley where Alex, like in the Central Goulburn, struggled to beat the top teams, it was a disappointing end but costly losses to lower placed teams at the Showgrounds were one of the reasons Alex missed the four.

The Seniors had finished fifth but the Reserves finished in third spot and the under 18s made fourth spot after some sort of match ratio calculation based on number of win, byes, forfeits, etc sort of like the Duckworth Lewis system in the cricket.

Alexandra rover Neil Oakley (pictured) tied with a Warburton Millgrove player James Iacono with 25 votes to win the Wandin Medal as Best and Fairest in Second Division whilst Steven Hedger polled 16 votes, one behind the winner in the Reserves award. Alexandra girls Loren Miller (A) and Michelle Jack (B) won the Netball Awards.



• Neil Oakley •

The reserves and Under 18s travelled to Gembrook to contest the 1st Semi Finals with The 18s being beaten 1.0 – 3.5 – 4.7 – 5.8.38 to Warb. Mill. 2.3 – 4.3 – 6.5 – 8.8.56. Best: C.Wallis, C.Southurst, A.Daly, R.Andrews.

The Reserves after a tight first half got well on top in the second half and had a big win against Seville. 3.4 – 6.5 – 13.7 – 19,9.123 to 2.0 – 6.1 – 8.2 – 10,3.63. Best: L.Russell, B.Heard (5), T.Bohan, S.Hedger, S.Jeal (4)

The Reserves returned to Gembrook a fortnight later to play Yarra Junction in the Prelim.Final. Again the first half was tight with scores even at the main break. Alex had a good third quarter with five goals to one then despite being goalless in the last, held on to win 2.5 – 7.6 – 12.10 – 12.13.85 to Y.J. 2.3 – 7.6 – 8.7 – 11.10.76. Best: D.Oakley, J.Kidd, S.Hedger (3), T.Bohan. B.Heard kicked 3 goals.

Alex. B grade netballers also won 36 to 30 V Yarra J. but A grade 16 lost to Thornton Eildon. 27

Alexandra then made the trip to Healesville but not to the Queens Park Oval where Alex had played in the previous stint in the Yarra Valley but to a newer complex well out of town to play Warburton Millgrove in the Grand Final. W.M. won the toss and kicked with the strong breeze favouring the Healesville end, making the most of their advantage. Alex tried hard to get back into the game in the second qtr .but weren't as efficient up forward as their opponents leaving them still trailing badly at half-time. The third quarter was a repeat of the first leaving Alex. with an impossible task at three quarter time. Although Alex fought the game out W.M were far too good winning 6. 6 9.9 – 14.15 – 19.16.130 to Alex. 1.0 – 4.4 – 5.5 – 5.10.40. BEST: J.Kidd, A.Morrow, L.Russell, B.Heard (4), B.Ward, J.Cowell.

Later in the day Thornton Eildon 14.12 were beaten by Warburton Millgrove 15.15. On an indoor Netball Court Alexandra B grade 36 were beaten by Warburton Millgrove 45.

At the Club's Presentation Night held Sept 16th Trophies and Awards were presented to

Presidents Trophy: Margaret Hamill. *Trainers Trophy:* Jake Steyger. *Barry (Sprague) Thompson Best Clubman Award:* David McKinlay

Football. Seniors / Reserves / Under 18s.

Best & Fairest: Neil Oakley / Steve Hedger / Casey Southurst. *Runner up:* Chris Mullins / Lucas Russell / Aaron Daly. *Most Consistent:* Corey Jack / Hayden Nichol / Jye Ragg. *Most Determined:* Joe Mount / Tom Bohan / Chris Wallis. *Most Improved:* Sam Kidd / Brian Heard / Rhys Hodgins. *Best First Year:* Wayne Sweatman / Adam Morrow / Beau O'Brien. *Coaches Trophy:* Chris Mullins / James Kidd / Robert Andrews *Leading goalkicker:* Wayne Haggis (39) / Brian heard (35) / Chris McKay (29).

Netball A,B

Best and Fairest: Emma Thomas / Michelle Jack. *Runner- up:* Bec McLeod / Samantha Westwood. *Most Improved:* Claire McDonald / Vanessa Gill. *Coaches Trophy:* Claire McGennissen / Kristie Warren-Smith.

At the Presentation for the Junior Club held Sept 10th Trophies were presented to:

Football. Seymour and District Junior Football Netball League Under 15 / Under 13 / Under 11.

Best & Fairest: Brayden Norris / * Nathan Dundas / Ryley Norris. *Runner up:* Tyson Biffin / Bill Nye / Will Meggitt. *Most Consistent:* Adam Straw / Bart Wallace / Daniel Straw. *Most Determined:* Matt Steiner / Jason Shaw / Beau Clarke. *Most Improved:* Nick Malcolm / Luke Bridgart / Jack Tossol / *Best First Year:* Zack Vincent / Brent McDonald / Mitchell Sanders. *Coaches Trophy:* Callum Hogan / Nick Taylor / Nick Gyseen. *Leading goalkicker:* Tyson Biffin (46) / Shaun Graham (24) / Ryley Norris (10). * Also won SDJFNL U/13 B&F

Netball U/15, U13/ U 11.

Best and Fairest: Brooke Davis, Jess Kupke / Hayley Elkington / N/A. *Runner Up:* N/A / Lauren Steyger / N/A *Most Improved:* Tess McDonald / Tess Malcolm / Sasha Mason. *Most Determined:* Kirby Welch / Teagan Halligan / Jayde Cairns. *Coaches Trophy:* Elle McDonald / Kathryn Veldman / Kimberly Shaw. *Encouragement: (U11only)* Sophie Venn.

