

SANDRINGHAM DRAGONS



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TAC CUP 2017



2017



SEASON REVIEW

The Sandringham Dragons 2017 campaign was an overall strong season that reflected the hard work and determination of the coaching staff and playing group with the Dragons finishing fourth on the ladder with 11 wins and seven losses. The Dragons playing group personified team values to overcome on and off-field challenges, reaching the TAC Cup Grand Final for the second year in a row and performing strongly at the National and Rookie drafts.

A blistering start to the season saw the Dragons win their first four games, allowing the team to be well-positioned before losing a number of players to APS sporting commitments. A mid-season form slump with a number of players coming in and out of the team resulted in Sandringham struggling to consistently perform.

2017 saw a revamped finals structure in the TAC Cup competition with all finals games posing as elimination finals. Sandringham faced 2016 grand finalists Murray Bushrangers in their first elimination final at the newly renovated MARS Stadium. Will Walker and Hamish Brayshaw led the Dragons to a comfortable 51-point win kicking seven goals between them.

A tight tussle against minor premiers Oakleigh Chargers at Simmonds Stadium saw Sandringham scrape through to their second consecu-

tive grand final appearance with a nine-point win.

Despite Sandringham falling short of premiership glory, the coaching staff emphasized post-match how proud they were of the Dragons efforts in the grand final and over the season irrespective of the final result. Coach Jeremy Barnard made note of the way the playing group competed to the end of the match and were able to handle themselves

under adversity while upholding the values of the Dragons, saying it was a testament to who they are as young men.

Talent Manager Ryan O'Connor said "the way the boys carried themselves in the loss and the way they represented the club, even though we didn't quite get there, they competed right to the final siren and as a club we are really proud of that and our people."



During the early parts of the 2017 season, 16 Dragons players trialled for Vic Metro with six players making the squad and going on to compete at the National Championships across Australia. Top-agers Andrew Brayshaw, Angus Styles, Charlie Constable and Hayden McLean represented the Sandringham Dragons, with bottom-agers Ben and Max King also joining them.

The best-and-fairest presentation at Sandy Bay was a time for the club to award

individual accolades and recognise the contribution of members of the playing group and coaching staff throughout the season. Defender Geordie Nagle was awarded the Sandringham Dragons best and fairest after polling 36 votes across the season, with midfielders Quintin Montanaro and Will Walker rounding out the top three with 34 and 31 votes, respectively.

17 Dragons boys attended draft combines at both the National and State levels, a number which O'Connor said reflected the hard-work and determination of the players throughout the year.

The National and Rookie drafts held in late November saw Sandringham perform strongly with seven Dragons drafted across the two periods.

Andrew Brayshaw (Fremantle, No. 2), Will Walker (North Melbourne, No. 23), Charlie Constable (Geelong, No. 36), Nathan Murphy (Collingwood, No. 39) and Hamish Brayshaw (West Coast Eagles, No. 68) were taken in the National Draft held at Sydney's Hordern Pavilion, whilst Angus Styles and Joel Amartey were taken by Sydney in the Rookie Draft with picks 14 and 28, respectively.

As with all success, there comes a number of challenges that the Dragons as whole had to overcome throughout the season. O'Connor said that one of the greatest challenges as a club was managing 72 boys who as individuals are quite different and trying to help them and their families juggle commitments to school sport while also studying and in many cases preparing for their final year 12 exams.

"From players, to staff and parents everyone was there for each other and the boys grabbed their chances anytime they could," he said.

"As a club it is really important for us to promote a commitment to family, school and sport ... having a balance, so the boys work to develop and be their best on and off the field,"

"We are really proud to have had a number of boys achieve strong results throughout their final year at school and VCE exams."

As a club, the Sandringham Dragons strongly affirm the aim of the football department is to prepare the players leaving the program as best as possible to play football at their highest possible level. The Dragons are proud to have seen a number of players who were part of 2017's playing group sign with VFL clubs for the 2018 season.

2017 also saw the Sandringham Dragons field a girl's team in the inaugural TAC Cup Girls competition. Launched in March, the competition saw Dragons travel around Victoria playing five rounds against the Murray Bushrangers, Oakleigh Chargers, Northern Knights, Western Jets and the Greater Western Victoria Rebels. Sandringham concluded the season with mixed results, finishing eighth on the ladder with two wins and three losses.

At the second AFLW National Draft held in October, Sandringham Dragons player Isabel



Huntington was drafted with pick 1 to the Western Bulldogs. Despite not playing a game in the 2017 TAC Cup season due to an ACL injury, Huntington's early football career saw her catch the eye of recruiters.

As with any year, a number of players have departed the club as they graduate from the TAC Cup program.



In 2017, the Dragons experienced a unique situation with both Hamish and Andrew Brayshaw being drafted at the National Draft. Their transition into the AFL will see them depart Sandringham and the end of an era.

For a number of years, the Dragons have had at least one Brayshaw in the squad, with older brother Angus being drafted to the Melbourne Football Club in 2014. O'Connor said the Brayshaw brothers "presence, leadership and input around the club will be missed."

Looking ahead to the 2018 season, the Dragons will have two inclusions in the NAB AFL Level One Academy with Jack Mahoney (St Kevin's College) and Fischer McAsey (East Brighton) being invited to the academy. Sandringham will also have three players representing them in the Level Two Academy with twins Ben and Max King being elevated from the Level One Academy and Bailey Smith being invited to join the squad following a promising bottom-age year in the TAC Cup.

Following on from the welfare program developed in 2016, the Dragons spent the 2017 season further creating and developing a club environment where all players, staff and volunteers feel secure while they are striving to get the very best out of themselves. Sandringham, as an all-encompassing club, pride themselves on operating with an "R U OK" philosophy, where there is a strong bond and relationship between players and players and staff both at and away from footy and every-

one is able to check in and support each other.

The Dragons take pride in being more than a club and being an all-encompassing family where everyone is able to feel comfortable and maximize their experience at the TAC Cup.

With over 62 volunteers across the entire program and more than 450 players across all the squads the Dragons would like to extend their greatest gratitude for all the work everyone has put in over the course of the season, the day to day operations of the club would not exist without the work from our staff and volunteers.

The Dragons would like to extend a special mention to Talent Manager Ryan O'Connor, Football Operations Manager Toby Jedwab, Game Day Football Manager Ian Penn, TAC Head Coach Jeremy Barnard and his assistants in Jackson Kornberg, Mick Lovejoy, Brad Berry and Fraser Cameron.

The Dragons would also like to extend their sincerest gratitude and appreciation to our community partners and sponsors. Without the added input from them, the Dragons would not be able to provide the level of service and the quality of the program that we do.

ROUND ONE

Dragons charge to win over Oakleigh



Sandringham Dragons have started their premiership defence with an impressive 56-point win over Oakleigh Chargers at Ikon Park on Sunday.

The Dragons extended their lead at every change to charge home winners, 17.10 (112) to 8.8 (56).

Despite a five-goal-to-two second quarter coach Jeremy Barnard isn't getting carried away with the win.

"We dominated the game for three quarters ... there was a patch there at the backend of the first quarter where our pressure started to come off a

little bit but then the guys were able to ramp it up and started to play real Dragons pressure footy," he said.

"When we play Dragons footy we are pretty hard to beat with our ball movement, our scrumage and our pressure.

"Whingeing about a nine-goal win is not a bad thing."

Assistant coach Jackson Kornberg echoed Barnard's comments.

"It is always pleasing when you come out with a nine-goal win but there were still times where we let them move the

ball [the way they wanted] which are things we need to work on," he said.

"There are plenty of things we need to tidy up going into Northern Knights next week but it is always good to win after something like that."

Debutant Max King was the star forward kicking 4 goals on debut, including two in quick succession during the Dragons dominant second quarter.

Kornberg was impressed by King's debut game.

" [He] played a pretty good aerial game of footy ... he took a couple of really strong marks," he told Dragons media post match.

"He is going to be a really promising prospect for us as a tall forward and playing in the ruck at times.

"He did well and still has some things to improve on but as a first gamer he did really well."

Quintin Montanaro was nominated best on ground by the coaching staff after a solid performance on the wing.

Kornberg said Montanaro enabled the Dragons to move the ball the way they wanted to through the middle.

"He gave us really good drive ... he was really good defensively as well," he said.

"He sort of fell out of the game a little bit in the third quarter but really picked it up in the last half."

Andrew Brayshaw kicked the first goal of the game and never let up after that with a team high 25 disposals. Lucas Barrett, Isaac Morrisby and Aaron Trusler also impressed up forward, kicking two goals each in a high-scoring Dragons forward line.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Sandringham Dragons	3.3	8.3	14.7	17.9 (111)
Oakleigh Chargers	2.1	4.3	5.4	8.8 (56)

Goal Kickers: M. King 4, L. Barrett 2, A. Trusler 2, I. Morrisby 2, S. Williams, H. Mclean, W. Walker, A. Brayshaw, S. Cameron, D. Brereton, C. Constable

Best Players: Q. Montanaro, H. Mclean, W. Walker, M. King, A. Jarnestrom, M. Lohan

ROUND TWO

Dragons demolish Knights



Despite only executing their game plan for a half of football, the Sandringham Dragons were able to run out 26-point winners against a defiant Northern Knights on Sunday.

The Dragons dominated much of the first quarter enabling them to lock the ball inside their forward half scoring 3.4 (22) to 1.0 (6).

After an even second quarter, Knights players responded in the third keeping the Dragons goalless.

As Sandringham lacked defensive pressure and struggled to dominate possession, assistant coach Jackson Kornberg said it reflected the game being played as two halves.

"The first quarter and the last quarter we played really quite dominant Dragons footy and then fell away in the second and third quarter," he said post match.

With their defensive intensity challenge and trailing by one point at the final break, the Dragons fought hard

in the last quarter to improve their attacking ball movement.

A 3-goal-to-one final quarter allowed the Dragons to secure their second win of the season and remain one of three undefeated teams.

"They showed a lot of grit and determination and their defensive pressure was outstanding and it enabled us to get a lot of scoring opportunities," Kornberg said.

"It is a credit to the boys and to the fitness staff that we were able to run out the game so I think the boys showed a lot of determination in the last quarter.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Sandringham Dragons	3.4	5.7	5.9	10.15 (75)
Northern Knights	1.0	3.0	6.4	7.7 (49)

Goal Kickers: S. Williams 3, J. Amartey 2, H. Brayshaw, W. Walker, L. Barrett, M. King, I. Morrisby

Best Players: A. Brayshaw, L. Barrett, C. Constable, A. Jarnestrom, W. Walker, S. Williams

Heading into the final quarter Dragons coaching staff reiterated to the players that it wasn't panic stations yet.

"We spoke to the group about in every game or every last quarter there is a moment that will turn the game ... we just focused on making that moment our moment," assistant coach Jackson Kornberg said.

"The main message was if we play our footy then we can get over the top."

Andrew Brayshaw was judged best on ground by the coaching staff after an impressive four-quarter effort gathering 27 disposals, 9 tackles and 3 inside 50's.

"I thought through the midfield he was instrumental, especially around the stoppage," Kornberg said post-match.

"In the last quarter he really stepped up with his spread and he set up a couple of goals ... which is something we have really been working on the last couple of weeks so he put together a really, really good game."

Lucas Barrett, Charlie Constable, Alfie Jarnestrom, Will Walker, Sebastian Williams rounded out the teams best.

ROUND THREE

Dragons dominance downs Jets



"[Kai] is new to the [TAC Cup] program but he played great Dragons football," Bernard said.

Bottom-ager Bailey Smith was awarded the coaches award after playing a solid game off halfback. In only his third TAC Cup outing Smith gathered 22 disposals, 5 marks and 4 rebound 50s.

The day was soured by a number of injuries to Dragons players, most notably a serious knee injury to ruckman Ethan Casey.

A commanding 64-point victory against Western Jets saw the Dragons start their season with three consecutive wins and become one of two remaining undefeated teams.

Led by assistant coach Mick Lovejoy the Dragons dominated the contest after an even first quarter. Controlling the game and clearances led to an abundance of scoring opportunities, kicking 11-goals-to-two after quarter time.

The Dragons forwards worked dynamically with captain Hayden McLean and Max King missing due to Academy commitments. The Dragons had seven different goal kickers with Isaac Morrisby continuing his strong start to the season with four goals and Aaron Trusler, a lively small forward also scoring 4 goals.

Head coach Jeremy Barnard said the team had played outstanding Dragons football.

"At one stage we had 3 blokes down on the bench," he said post match.

"We worked hard and we worked smart ... Times where we controlled the ball we put them under extreme pressure with +32 tackles.

"When you are 3-0 it sets yourself up going forward."

There were a number of outstanding performances from the Dragons with Andrew Brayshaw continuing his run of good form, Lucas Barrett providing effort and leadership in the midfield and Max Lohan off the backline.

Kai Owens was adjudged best on ground after an influential performance at half-forward where he gathered 18 disposals, 4 inside 50s and 3 clearances.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Sandringham Dragons	5.1	9.3	14.4	16.5 (101)
Western Jets	3.4	3.5	4.7	5.7 (37)

Goal kickers: I. Morrisby 4, A. Trusler 4, S. Williams 2, D. Brereton 2, W. Walker 2, J. Amartey, A. Brayshaw

Best: K. Owens, B. Smith, A. Brayshaw, M. Lohan, A. Trusler, I. Morrisby

ROUND FOUR

Dragons hold off fast-starting Stingrays

The Sandringham Dragons have continued their strong start to the season, despite making 13 team changes, beating the Dandenong Stingrays by 21 points at Frankston Oval on Saturday.

The Stingrays dominated for much of the first half before an eight-goal-to-three second half secured the Dragons fourth win for the season. Captain Hayden McLean set the Dragons second half scoring alight with two goals in as many minutes in the third quarter.

Coach Jeremy Barnard described the first half as a “game of ping pong” before the Dragons were able to take control in the third quarter when the game was there for the taking.

The Dragons were +14 in front-half turnovers allowing their forwards to compete and enabling the midfielders to set up going inside the attacking 50. Barnard said he was happy to capitalize on the scoreboard from much improved forward half pressure after lacking in the first half.

The club mantra of “next man up” was on show after the Dragons were forced to make a significant number of changes due to injuries and APS football commencing. Barnard said he was delighted to see debutants and first-gamers for the season playing their role within the team.

“[They] know the system and what we are trying to do so what it shows is that [they] are capable [of performing].”

Barnard said post-match that he was impressed with the performance of the team’s leaders, with the likes of Will Walker, Lucas Barrett and Hamish Brayshaw bringing the Dragons back into the game.

Talent Manager Ryan O’Connor said



the win made him proud of the program and what the club is achieving as a whole, in conjunction with the coaching team and support staff.

23rd man and debutant, Ryan Macdermid, was lively up forward kicking two goals from 50 per cent game time.

Dynamic small forward Aaron Trusler continued his strong start to the season kicking another bag of four goals whilst winger Quintin Montanaro gathered 19 kicks to go with seven inside 50s and four tackles.

Lucas Barrett was judged best on ground after a strong performance in which he gathered 25 disposals, nine tackles, seven clearances and five inside 50s.

Last years captain Hamish Brayshaw was award the coaches award after he led from the front gathering 28 disposals, eight tackles, seven clearances, five inside 50s and one rebound 50.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Sandringham Dragons	4.4	6.4	11.4	14.6 (90)
Dandenong Stingrays	4.1	7.3	8.6	10.9 (69)

Goal Kickers: A. Trusler 4, H. Mclean 2, R. Macdermid 2, M. Lohan, N. Stamatidis, A. Sakeson, J. Gibbins, J. Bakes, J. Paul

Best Players: L. Barrett, H. Brayshaw, H. Mclean, A. Sakeson, J. Hale, S. Sofronidis

ROUND FIVE

Gippsland surge demolishes Dragons



An eight-goal-to-zero final quarter secured Sandringham's fate as Gippsland Power stormed home to hand the Dragons a 69-point thumping.

A lacklustre performance from the first bounce handed the Dragons their first loss of the season. A game riddled with errors resulted in the Dragons inexperienced side unable to capitalise when in possession of the ball.

Gippsland kicked the first three goals of the game before goals to Ari Sakeson, Will Walker and Jacob Bakes shifted the Dragons into gear.

After quarter time the Power pulled away, able to outsmart and outplay the Dragons in every aspect.

A two-goal-to-one third quarter allowed Sandringham to remain within reach of a win heading into the final break.

They appeared to be caught off guard in the final quarter as Gippsland piled on eight unanswered goals to dismantle Sandringham's structure and style

of play, securing their second win of the season.

The Dragons were unable to maintain possession during the game and struggled to play cohesive, team football compared to past weeks.

Coach Jeremy Barnard told the Bay-side Leader that there were no excuses for the side's poor performance.

"Credit to them (Gippsland), they put us under a fair bit of pressure," he said.

"They made it a real slow, inside game. They also put a lot of pressure on the ball carrier and we weren't able to handle it."

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Sandringham Dragons	3.3	5.6	7.7	7.8 (50)
Gippsland Power	4.3	9.5	10.9	18.11 (119)

Goal Kickers: A. Trusler 2, H. Mclean, A. Sakeson, J. Bakes, W. Walker, B. McCoy

Best Players: Q. Montanaro, J. Mangoni, H. Mclean, H. Brayshaw, L. Barrett, J. Bakes

He said the Dragons would use the loss as a learning experience for the players.

"A few people got exposed yesterday but it's all about teaching and learning and improving."

Barnard said post-match that the Dragons' leaders were exceptional, namely Quintin Montanaro, Hamish Brayshaw and Lucas Barrett.

Montanaro was named best on ground for the second time this season after a solid four-quarter performance amassing 26 disposals, nine marks, seven tackles, four rebound 50s and three inside 50s.

ROUND SIX

Pioneers punish undisciplined Dragons



An undisciplined performance from the Sandringham Dragons saw them go down by 21-points to the Bendigo Pioneers on Sunday. The Pioneers led at every change to record their second win 11.13 (79) to 8.10 (58) at Queen Elizabeth Oval.

The Pioneers led by four points at half-time, before gaining the ascendancy in the third term when they added 6.1 to 3.4 to extend their advantage to 19 points at the last change.

The Dragons were lucky to be four points down at the main break after an inaccurate first half from the Pioneers. Bendigo gained ascendancy in the third term with a six goal to three quarter extending their lead to 19 points at the last change.

Talent Manager Ryan O'Connor said the match was "disappointing ... but that's footy".

He said the Dragons players and staff would work on a way to get themselves out of the "hole" they are currently in and to play better team footy after losing two consecutive games to lower placed teams.

"We don't want to make excuses," he said.

Basic skill errors and over handballing allowed the Pioneers to dominate forward half pressure and capitalise on the scoreboard.

Coach Jeremy Barnard described the game as "pretty poor", lamenting the skills of the Dragons players saying they were not up to a TAC Cup standard.

"We've got to work harder on the fundamentals of the game," he said post match.

"For whatever reason in the past two weeks we have gone away from being able to execute what the Dragons are well known for.

"We will keep working on that, we will helping players to get better, keep teaching them."

The Dragons now sit third on the ladder with Barnard said the playing group had put themselves "back in the pack" in terms of their season.

However, he said the "coaching group [would] work hard" to get to the bottom of why the Dragons have been playing "average footy".

Hamish Brayshaw continued his strong start to the season with a Sportsmart best on ground performance gathering 32 disposals, 17 contested possessions, eight clearances, seven inside 50s, five tackles and four rebound 50s.

Jeremy Barnard said post match that it was an "indictment" on the Dragons midfielders that Brayshaw is consistently awarded best on ground "because it means others aren't helping out."

Julian Howard was presented the Fin Fitness Coaches Award after a strong performance where he lost a tooth from a stray elbow. Howard gathered 20 disposals, 12 kicks, five tackles and two rebound 50s.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Sandringham Dragons	1.3	4.6	7.8	8.10 (58)
Bendigo Pioneers	2.4	6.8	10.9	11.13 (79)

Goal Kickers: I. Morrisby 2, A. Trusler 2, W. Walker, Q. Montanaro, J. Amartey, D. Brereton

Best Players: H. Brayshaw, J. Howard, A. Styles, W. Walker, Q. Montanaro, A. Sakeson

ROUND SEVEN

Murray Bushrangers avenge Grand Final



Round seven marked the second and final country road trip for the Sandringham Dragons. The players hopped on the team bus at 6am in pitch-black darkness in pursuit of a victory in a vital grand final rematch against a hungry Murray Bushrangers outfit seeking redemption.

The three and a half hour drive to Wangaratta gave the players an appreciation for what the Murray Bushrangers players have to endure on a weekly basis and the mental fortitude involved in suiting up against elite opposition with minimal rest ahead of a match. The boys had the privilege of playing the curtain raiser to the main event of the day — Collingwood VFL v Werribee which promoted the sport in Wangaratta in partnership with the AFL’s Country Round initiative.

At the end of the first quarter, the Dragons and Bushrangers were on even terms with 27-points apiece on the back of goals to Hamish Brayshaw (two for the quarter), Hayden McLean and debutant Adam Forbes.

The Bushrangers stole the show in the second quarter creating a 27-point buffer. A goalless second quarter saw a lapse in concentration from the Dragons with a number of uncharacteristic errors made due to the frantic pressure applied by the Bushrangers. This consequently affected our structures around the ground and our trademark ball use. Unfortunately the Bushrangers were able to capitalise on their forward 50 entries with 4 goals.

An improved third quarter led to us trailing by 32 points at the final break with the solitary goal coming from Ari

Sakeson.

The fourth quarter saw a spirited fight-back from the Dragons, displaying signs of the Dragons brand of football that they pride themselves on bringing to the table every week. The Dragons scored four goals within the opening ten minutes of the quarter to reduce the deficit to 8 points and bring the game back in the balance. Hamish Brayshaw and Aaron Trusler were the catalysts to our comeback with Brayshaw’s midfield exploits evident where he was able to evade opposition players and surge the football inside 50 inside 50 to our advantage. Trusler’s composure and general footy smarts in congested spaces allowed him to snap two wonderful goals in quick succession. This was only for the Bushrangers to run away with the game in the dying minutes once the Dragons had run out of legs for us to eventually fall short by 23 points.

Hamish Brayshaw continued his fine form and was adjudged a fourth consecutive Sportsmart Best on Ground award with 32 disposals, 11 marks, 8 tackles and 2 goals. Debutant Jack Denborough (9 disposals, 2 inside 50’s and 1 score assist) put in an encouraging first-up performance and was presented with the Fin Fitness Coaches Award.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Sandringham Dragons	4.3	4.4	5.8	9.12 (66)
Murray Bushrangers	4.3	8.7	10.10	13.11 (89)

Goal Kickers: H. Brayshaw 2, A. Trusler 2, A. Forbes, A. Sakeson, H. Persson, J. Rendell, H. Mclean

Best Players: H. Brayshaw, H. Mclean, M. Lohan, L. Barrett, J. Denborough, A. Forbes

ROUND EIGHT

Dragons stop Rebels force



Sandringham Dragons are back on the winners list after a 39-point win over the Greater Western Victoria Rebels at Trevor Barker Oval on Sunday.

The Dragons were able to hold off a fast-starting Rebels outfit to storm home winners after a dominant second quarter.

It was all Rebels in the first quarter despite the Dragons dominating the tackle and inside 50 count. Unable to maintain possession the Rebels capitalized on costly turnovers made by the Dragons players kicking four-goals-to-one in the first quarter. Debutants Tristan Brunning and Tomas Long were shining lights for Sandringham

A dominant start to the second quarter and three goals to lively small forward Aaron Trusler allowed the Dragons to get back into the game. Sandring-

ham kicked the first five goals to take the lead before two late ones to the Rebels Jed Hill put them back in front on the half-time siren. Sandringham was able to lift their intensity and play much-improved Dragons football.

A second half riddled with errors from the Rebels allowed the Dragons to capitalize on the scoreboard and run away with the game.

Captain Hayden McLean was award-

ed the Sportsmart best on ground player at a post-match function at Milanos Tavern in Brighton. McLean was a strong presence up forward kicking three goals and taking nine marks.

Sam Sofronidis was awarded the Fin Fitness coaches award after a solid performance in defence where he gather 17 dispsosals, eight kicks and three marks.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Sandringham Dragons	1.2	6.4	10.7	14.9 (93)
GWV Rebels	4.4	6.6	7.8	7.12 (54)

Goal Kickers: A. Trusler 4, H. Mclean 3, H. Brayshaw 2, T. Long, J. Gorman, L. Barrett, J. Bakes, T. Brunning

Best Players: H. Mclean, S. Sofronidis, H. Brayshaw, L. Barrett, A. Trusler, J. Bakes

ROUND NINE

Dragons lose thriller to Eastern Ranges



A fourth quarter comeback from the Eastern Ranges handed them a one-point win over the Sandringham Dragons on Saturday at Trevor Barker Oval.

A goal to Sam Hayes tied the scores with seven minutes left on the clock before the Ranges rushed a behind to hold on for a 8.6 (54) to 7.11 (53) win moving them into the top eight.

Sandringham controlled the play for much of the second half but were unable to capitalise on the scoreboard in what was a low-scoring game.

An inefficient third quarter in front of goal, despite dominating possession, saw the Dragons kick 1.5 (11) and take an 11-point lead into the final break.

The Ranges came out of the blocks firing in the fourth quarter kicking three-goals-to-one to record their

fourth win of the season.

Bottom-ager Dawit McNeish was named in the best players after a strong debut game playing through the midfield. In the absence of a number of the Dragons best midfielders, McNeish's tackling pressure and second-efforts were highly commended by the coaching staff. McNeish gathered 12 disposals, eight tackles, three inside 50s and three rebound 50s.

Geordie Nagle was presented the Fin-Fitness coaches award after his

best game of the season at fullback. His strong intercept marking on the last line of defence and 11 rebound 50s drew high-praise and comparisons to Essendon's Michael Hurley. Nagle gathered 32 disposals, seven marks and five tackles.

Midfielder Quintin Montanaro was back to his best, named the Sportsmart best on ground. Montanaro amassed a game-high 32 disposals to go with his seven tackles, six marks, four inside 50s and three rebound 50s.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Sandringham Dragons	2.3	5.4	6.9	7.11 (53)
Eastern Ranges	3.0	4.4	5.4	8.6 (54)

Goal Kickers: H. Mclean 2, T. Long, W. Walker, J. Gorman, J. Gibbins, R. Macdermid

Best Players: Q. Montanaro, G. Nagle, H. Mclean, W. Walker, S. Sofronidis, D. McNeish

ROUND 10

Dragons curb Cannons comeback



Sandringham Dragons have run home 35-point winners after a second half comeback against the Calder Cannons on Saturday for the first game of TAC Cup's Futures Rounds.

The Dragons controlled much of the play in the first quarter leading by 12 points at quarter time before a four-goal-to-two second quarter from the Cannons saw them take the lead at the main break. A half-time rev up from coach Jeremy Barnard proved beneficial with the Dragons piling on six of the next seven goals to set up their sixth win of the season.

Senior coach Barnard said he was pleased to see the Dragons respond after their half-time "bake".

"It is pleasing for us to be able to turn it around," he said post match.

"The older players really got going after half time when they were challenged."

The Dragons forward half pressure in the second half set up the win,

finishing the game +8 in front-half turnovers, a stat Barnard said reflected strong defensive pressure.

Talent manager Ryan O'Connor said he was pleased to see the clubs leaders leading from the front when the group was challenged on the scoreboard.

"They showed the younger boys what they need to do when it gets tough ... footy is tough, they try to beat you, so really well done," he said.

Barnard also had praise for the bottom-agers who had stood up to the challenge of playing TAC Cup football with Sandringham debuting over 31 players this season.

Despite the comfortable win Barnard said the challenge the Cannons presented in the second quarter showed the Dragons had some significant work to do over the next couple weeks.

When the playing group needed a backline general after an onslaught of Cannons goals in the second quarter, Max Lohan stood up gathering 21 disposals and four marks.

Jai Hale drew comparisons to Tony Lockett from Ryan O'Connor post game after a solid performance kicking two goals. Quintin Montanaro and Lucas Barrett worked tirelessly throughout the match gathering 33 and 32 disposals, respectively, continuing their impressive run of form.

Ruckman Josh Gibbins was awarded the Fin-Fitness Coaches Award after recognition for his continued development over the course of the season.

Jeremy Barnard said he was proud to see 'significant improvement' from Gibbins over the past four weeks. Gibbins dominated the stoppages gathering 31 hit-outs alongside his five tackles and three marks.

Will Walker was named Sportsmart Best on Ground following an outstanding performance in the new-look Dragons forward line kicking two goals and collecting 22 disposals.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Sandringham Dragons	3.3	5.3	11.10	13.13 (91)
Calder Cannons	1.3	5.6	6.6	8.8 (56)

Goal Kickers: J. Hale 2, H. Persson 2, W. Walker 2, T. Brunning 2, M. Lohan, T. Patten, T. Long, J. Gorman, N. Stamatīs

Best Players: W. Walker, Q. Montanaro, M. Lohan, J. Hale, L. Barrett, J. Gibbins

ROUND 11

Dragons defeat top-of-the-table Falcons



Sandringham Dragons have stormed home 49-point winners against an undermanned Geelong Falcons at Trevor Barker Oval on Sunday.

The Dragons dominated the Falcons from the opening ball-up, winning easily 9.12 (66) to 2.5 (17).

Sandringham were bolstered by the inclusion of 17 players from the previous week, with a number of boys returning from their APS/ AGSV sporting commitments.

The Dragons, who debuted five players in game two of Futures Rounds, piled on the first seven goals before Hayden Elliot put the Falcons on the board.

In what was arguably Sandringham's strongest display for the season, they were able to restrict Geelong to just seven scoring shots from 45 inside 50 entries, their lowest in a match, lowering the previous record set against

the Dragons in 2014.

The Dragons dominated the key statistics controlling disposals (454-244), kicks (209-139) and marks (88-48) but failed to make an impression on the scoreboard. Despite controlling the ball Dragons coach Jeremy Barnard told the Moorabbin Glen Eira leader he felt "flat" about the win.

"The strong feeling from the coaching group (was that) we really dominated the game, absolutely dominated the game, we were able to control the opposition quite easily...but our influence on the game was a bit clunky," he said after the win.

"I think we had over 450 possessions

so we should have been looking for something like an 18 or 19-goal effort. So we are not entirely satisfied."

Small forward Lachie Harris and Isaac Morrisby kicked two goals apiece on their return game for the Dragons with Sandringham's forward line proving too strong for the Falcons defense.

Angus Styles was adjudged the Sportsmart best on ground after an impressive performance upon return from Vic Metro duties. Styles gathered 33 disposals.

Ruckman Joel Amartey was presented the coaches award after a commanding performance in the ruck with 28 hit outs and 19 disposals.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Sandringham Dragons	4.1	7.4	8.8	9.12(66)
Geelong Falcons	0.2	1.2	1.2	2.5 (17)

Goals: L. Harris 2, I. Morrisby 2, W. Kennedy, M. Lohan, K. Owens, W. Walker, A. Seaton

Best: A. Styles, J. Amartey, W. Walker, L. Harris, K. Owens, B. Smith

ROUND 12

Dragons turn off the Power at Casey Fields



The Sandringham Dragons found a late spark to storm home against Gippsland Power on Saturday, clinching a one-point win in wet and windy conditions at Casey Fields.

The Dragons, who had previously kicked two goals for the game, scored three goals within five minutes to run home winners 5.3 (33) to 4.8 (32).

Competitive, hard-fought football played by both sides left the game wide open until the dying minutes of the match when goals to Alfie Jarnestrom, Kai Owens and a contentious free kick to Max King saw Sandringham take the lead.

The Dragons struggled to effectively convert their opportunities in the dismal weather, dominating disposals 394 to 272 but only being able to move the ball inside 50 38 times.

Despite the Dragons disposal dominance Gippsland led for majority of

the match. However, Sandringham's defensive pressure ensured the Power struggled to capitalize on their 45 entries inside 50, resulting in only four goals.

Post-match the Dragons coaching staff had a key message for the boys: to enjoy the four points but not be satisfied with the way it played out. Dragons senior coach Jeremy Barnard said the group had a number of key aspects to work on before next weeks match but close wins help the group grow.

Returning from injury Alfie Jarnestrom was awarded the Sportsmart best on ground after an impressive first game

back which saw him gather 27 disposals, 11 clearances, six tackles and the goal that set the Dragons final five minutes alight.

Reliable defender Geordie Nagle was again rewarded for his effort and abilities with the Fin-Fitness coaches award. Nagle continued his superb run of form as a pillar of the Sandringham defensive unit with 30 disposals, nine tackles and nine rebound 50s.

Assistant coach Mick Lovejoy was full of praise for Nagle's hard work saying he consistently requests feedback in an effort to improve himself as a player and commit himself to the Dragons in the best way he possibly can.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Sandringham Dragons	1.1	2.1	2.2	5.3 (33)
Gippsland Power	0.2	3.5	3.6	4.8 (32)

Goal Kickers: K. Owens, W. Walker, A. Jarnestrom, M. King, I. Morrisby

Best Players: A. Jarnestrom, G. Nagle, L. Harris, W. Walker, K. Owens, J. Amartey

ROUND 13

Dragons dig deep to defeat Bendigo



The Sandringham Dragons dug deep on Saturday after a late scare from the Bendigo Pioneers to run home winners by 29 points at Trevor Barker Beach Oval.

The Pioneers clawed their way back to within 11 points halfway through the final quarter before the Dragons piled on the last three goals of the game to claim their ninth win of the season and move into third position on the ladder.

Sandringham dominated the game for much of the day, looking comfortable against an undermanned Bendigo outfit, setting up the win with a six-goal-to-two second quarter.

Despite the strong performance by the Dragons the Pioneers never gave up, working hard at the centre bounces to shut down the Sandringham's most prolific midfielders. Despite giving away height in the ruck battle, the Pioneers were able to gain control of the contest to start the final quarter and score three quick goals to cut

Sandringham's lead to just two goals. The Pioneers were efficient entering their forward 50 scoring 11 goals from 35 entries putting pressure on the Dragons defense.

Sandringham was boosted by the return of All Australian midfielder Charlie Constable who was damaging on his return from Vic Metro duties. Constable slotted back into the Dragons line-up with ease gathering 29 disposals, 11 clearances and pushing forward to kick three important goals.

Dual-sports gun Nathan Murphy was awarded Sportsmart best on ground

in his third game for the club. Murphy, who looked at home in the forward 50, kicked three goals to go with his 17 disposals, seven marks and six inside 50s.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Sandringham Dragons	3.6	9.10	11.10	15.10(100)
Bendigo Pioneers	2.1	5.1	8.3	11.5 (71)

Goal Kickers: N. Murphy 3, C. Constable 3, H. Mclean 2, I. Morrisby 2, W. Walker, J. Bakes, J. Amartey, A. Brayshaw, A. Trusler

Best Players: N. Murphy, C. Constable, A. Brayshaw, W. Walker, H. Mclean, J. Amartey

ROUND 14

Dragons fight off gallant Western Jets



The Sandringham Dragons have fought off a gallant Western Jets outfit to run home 30 points winners in turbulent conditions at Frankston Oval on Saturday.

A six-goal-to-one final quarter secured Sandringham's fifth win a row and consolidated fourth spot, moving one game clear of fifth-place Dandenong Stingrays.

The Jets, who came into the match having won only three matches from 13 outings, tested the Dragons resilience and never-say-die attitude taking a 5-point lead into the final quarter.

Three last quarter goals from Sportsmart's best on ground player Will Walker led the Dragons to a triumphant victory.

Fresh off his invite to the NAB AFL Draft Combine, Walker played with a

high level of confidence, amassing 30 disposals, nine clearances and five marks to consolidate a well-rounded display.

Bottom-ager Bailey Smith looked at home with a move into the midfield gathering a game-high 44 disposals, 13 inside 50s, 10 clearances and four rebound 50s. Smith, a product of

Xavier College, is eligible for the 2018 draft.

Small forward Aaron Trusler was awarded the Fin-Fitness coaches award after a return to form saw him kick four goals, three of which were in the second quarter to put Sandringham in front.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Sandringham Dragons	2.2	7.4	7.6	13.11(89)
Western Jets	3.2	5.3	8.5	9.5 (59)

Goal Kickers: A. Trusler 4, W. Walker 3, J. Hale 2, H. Mclean, J. Gorman, J. Bakes, R. Macdermid

Best Players: W. Walker, A. Trusler, B. Smith, Q. Montanaro, H. Mclean, G. Nagle

ROUND 15

Determined Dragons fall against Ranges



The Sandringham Dragons gave up a three-goal lead to go down to the Eastern Ranges by seven-points at Box Hill City on Oval on Sunday and end their five game winning streak.

The Dragons led by 18-points at the 11-minute mark of the third quarter before the Eastern Ranges stormed home in blistery conditions to win their fourth consecutive game.

The dominance of Eastern Ranges ruckman Sam Hayes (24 hitouts, two goals) and midfielder Jaidyn Stephenson (39 disposals, nine inside 50s) proved too much for the smaller bodied Dragons outfit.

The first half provided a close contest with both teams going goal-for-goal resulting in scores tied at 3.5 (23) apiece at half time.

Sandringham played much of the third quarter on their terms before the Ranges responded with four consecutive goals to take an 11-point lead into

the final quarter.

The Dragons looked out of sorts in the final term before two goals from lively small forward Aaron Trusler gave Sandringham some hope. However, the Dragons couldn't equalise with the Ranges towards the end of the game with Eastern proving too strong in defence.

Will Walker continued his impressive run of form being awarded the Fin Fitness best on ground player after

gathering 31 disposals, seven inside 50s and two score assists.

Debutant Ed Newman was awarded the Sportsmart coaches award after a solid first game in the midfield saw him gather 20 disposals, 10 clearances and two inside 50s.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Sandringham Dragons	2.2	3.5	6.5	8.12 (60)
Eastern Ranges	2.4	3.5	7.10	9.13 (67)

Goal Kickers: A. Richards 3, J. Howard 2, A. Trusler 2, J. Amartey

Best Players: W. Walker, E. Newman, A. Richards, S. Sofronidis, H. Mclean, C. Jones

ROUND 16

Oakleigh charge home to defeat Dragons



The Sandringham Dragons have suffered a second consecutive loss going down to the Oakleigh Chargers by eight points in Saturday's Metro triple-header at RAMS Arena.

The Dragons led by five points at three-quarter time before a three-goal-to-one final quarter saw Oakleigh all but secure a top-two finish.

Sandringham burst out the blocks in windy conditions but were wasteful in front of goal kicking 3.6 to take a 16-point lead into quarter time.

Despite Oakleigh fighting back and challenging the Dragons all day, Sandringham led at every change before two final quarter goals to top draft prospect Jack Higgins saw them home.

Isaac Morrisby provided a strong target up forward kicking two goals in his return game to the Dragons from APS football commitments, whilst lively small forward Lachie Harris also

kicked two goals.

Midfielder Andrew Brayshaw was named Fin-Fitness best on ground after a 28-disposal performance in which he gathered seven clearances, three inside 50s and three rebound 50s.

Swingman Howie Persson was awarded the Sportsmart coaches award after a strong week on the training track and amassing 11 disposals.

Sandringham, who are 1.11% ahead of fifth placed Murray Bushrangers, will now face third placed Dandenong Stingrays (11-5) on Saturday Trevor Barker Oval from 10:30am.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Sandringham Dragons	3.6	4.8	6.11	7.13 (55)
Oakleigh Chargers	1.2	4.5	6.6	9.9 (63)

Goal Kickers: L. Harris 2, I. Morrisby 2, L. Barrett, A. Jarnestrom, C. Constable

Best Players: A. Brayshaw, H. Persson, H. Mclean, C. Constable, I. Morrisby, J. Crocker

ROUND 17

Dandenong sting Dragons top-four hopes



A six-goal-to-zero second quarter set up the Dandenong Stingrays 11th win of the season as they defeated the Sandringham Dragons by 9 points at Trevor Barker Beach Oval on Saturday.

The Dragons fought back from a 44-point deficit in the third quarter to go into the final term four points down. An even final quarter meant Sandringham couldn't quite get over the line despite digging deep and challenging the third-placed Stingrays.

The Stingrays came out of the blocks in the second quarter scoring six goals in 10 minutes before two goals from lively small forward Aaron Trusler before half time ensured the game wasn't out of reach for the Dragons.

An off-the-ball free kick for a hit on Nathan Murphy, which saw him leave the field sick, at the start of the third quarter ignited fire in the Dragons,

as they piled on six of the next eight goals to keep their top four hopes alive.

Talent manager Ryan O'Connor said he was proud of the Dragons efforts after being challenged, saying it reflected the positive direction of Sandringham and their TAC Cup program.

Senior coach Jeremy Barnard said the clubs poor forward 50 entries to goals ratio was something the club would work on after they ran at less than

10% for the game.

"We were under the pump in the second quarter, they [Stingrays] played really good footy," he said at the Milanos post-match function.

"We limited their effectiveness after half time and that made a big difference when we got control of the game.

"We dropped a way a bit in the last quarter but we will keep working on that ... it is really important that when we lose we learn what worked and what didn't."

Midfielder and national combine invited Angus Styles was awarded the Fin Fitness best on ground after a strong four-quarter comeback performance from a poor game previously.

"Gus really was our best player today ... he took the game on, he tried to be aggressive with his decisions and ball use and he played a fantastic game today," Barnard said.

Styles gathered 18 disposals, five tackles, two inside 50s and one goal.

Newcomer Ed Newman was nominated the Sportsmart coaches award for the second time after amassing 21 disposals, four clearances, three inside 50s and three tackles.

Barnard said it was pleasing to see him slot into the Dragons program and game plan so seamlessly.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Sandringham Dragons	1.4	3.9	9.11	10.12 (72)
Dandenong Stingrays	2.5	8.8	10.9	11.15 (81)

Goal Kickers: A. Trusler 3, J. Gorman 2, A. Styles, C. Constable, S. Williams, A. Brayshaw, A. Jarnestrom

Best Players: A. Styles, E. Newman, A. Brayshaw, N. Murphy, S. Williams, J. Amartey

ROUND 18

Dragon dominance defeats Knights



A five-goal haul to midfielder Hamish Brayshaw led Sandringham Dragons to a 45-point victory over the Northern Knights at MARS Stadium in Ballarat on Saturday.

A nine-goal-to-three second half helped the Dragons to run away victorious, closing out their home-and-away season with a win.

Hamish Brayshaw returned comfortably to the Dragons line-up after 12-weeks playing with the Sandringham Zebras in the VFL, kicking the first two goals of the game.

Sandringham used the windy conditions to their advantage to get out to an 18-point lead in the first quarter before the Knights kicked two against the run of play to bring themselves within 13 points at quarter time.

The Knights dominated play in the second quarter to take the lead before a late goal to Seb Williams saw the Dragons take a one-point lead into the

main break.

After half-time it was all Dragons with Sandringham kicking four-goals-to-zero in the third quarter to set up their 11th win of the season and secure fourth position on the ladder ahead of finals.

Senior coach Jeremy Barnard emphasized the importance of the Dragons pressure in the win. Prior to Saturday's game the Northern Knights were the leading kicking team in the competition, averaging over 180 kicks per match but the Dragons defensive pressure and around the ground dominance restricted the Knights to just

132 kicks for the game.

Hamish Brayshaw was a clear best-on-ground standout and was awarded the Fin-Fitness best player after collecting 30 disposals, 11 tackles, eight marks, eight clearances and five inside 50s to go with his five goals.

Ruckman Joel Amartey was awarded the Sportsmart coaches award on his 18th birthday after dominating the ruck work with 28 hit-outs and two clearances to go with his 12 disposals.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Sandringham Dragons	4.2	5.4	9.13	14.13 (97)
Northern Knights	2.1	5.3	5.3	8.4 (52)

Goal Kickers: H. Brayshaw 5, I. Morrisby 2, J. Crocker, A. Brayshaw, C. Constable, S. Williams, A. Trusler, L. Harris, J. Amartey

Best Players: H. Brayshaw, J. Amartey, N. Murphy, A. Brayshaw, W. Walker, A. Jarnestrom

ELIMINATION FINAL

Dragons through to preliminary final



The Sandringham Dragons have progressed through to their second consecutive preliminary final after a 51-point win over last years Grand Finalists the Murray Bushrangers.

After trailing by 12 points early in the second quarter, the Dragons kicked five goals in a row to take a 20-point lead into halftime.

The Bushrangers paid the price for their second quarter lapse with Sandringham piling on six-goals-to-two in the third quarter and storming their way into next weeks preliminary final against the Oakleigh Chargers.

Midfielder Hamish Brayshaw told Rick Morris of TAC Cup Radio post match that the Dragons we never in doubt about beating Murray.

“It was a tough start and we knew they were going to bring their pressure but we knew that if we stuck to our structure and game plan that we would break them apart eventually ... it was a tough slog early but we got the better of them in the end.”

“It started at the contest, they’re a big bodied side so we just had to crack in but we couldn’t release our handballs properly so once our skills started to come on in the second and third quarter we really started to break them apart.

“We have a really strong core ... the last couple of years we have had a pretty good team but I think this year we have got a really even balance across the whole ground.”

The Dragons dominant win was hampered by injuries to defender Nathan Murphy in the first quarter, and Isaac Morrisby and Joel Crocker later in the game. Sandringham were down to two rotations on the bench for the final

quarter but were able to push through. Midfielder William Walker played his best game of the season kicking four goals to go with his equal game-high 25 disposals, five clearances and two inside 50s.

Walker told TAC Cup Radio’s Rick Morris after the game that it was “awesome” to be in the preliminary final.

“It is awesome to get to play in a preliminary final ... we worked really hard all year and our effort today showed that.”

“If we bring intensity and effort we can get past Oakleigh ... we beat them in round 1 so we know we can do it.

“If we can get the head start we want we can tear teams apart. If we can stick to our game plan for four quarters we will win games of footy.”

Alfie Jarnestrom was named the Fin-Fitness best player of the day after a strong game where he gathered 21 disposals, three tackles, three clearances, three inside 50s and three score assists.

Midfielder Quintin Montanaro was named the Sportsmart coaches player after returning to form following a number of quiet games. Montanaro gathered 19 disposals, five inside 50s, four tackles, three rebound 50s and three clearances.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Sandringham Dragons	2.2	9.6	15.8	19.11 (125)
Murray Bushrangers	3.3	6.4	8.5	11.8 (74)

Goal Kickers: W. Walker 4, H. Brayshaw 3, L. Harris 2, M. King 2, A. Brayshaw 2, A. Jarnestrom, S. Williams, A. Trusler, C. Constable, I. Morrisby, G. Nagle
Best Players: A. Jarnestrom, Q. Montanaro, J. Amartey, K. Owens, W. Walker, J. Hille

PRELIMINARY FINAL

Dragons march through to Grand Final



The Sandringham Dragons have stormed into their second consecutive TAC Cup Grand Final after defeating a competitive Oakleigh Chargers outfit by nine points at Simonds Stadium on Sunday.

In perfect conditions at Geelong, the Dragons got off to a flying start taking a 22-point lead into half time.

Hamish Brayshaw kicked the first goal of the game for the third week in a row to kick-start the Dragons preliminary final before Jack Higgins got Oakleigh on the board. Sandringham was wasteful in front of goal in the first quarter but a five-goal-to-two second quarter saw them take a healthy lead into half time.

Oakleigh came out firing in the third quarter kicking six goals in a row to take the lead before goals to Alfie Jarnestrom and Joel Amartey gave the Dragons some breathing space.

With their season on the line and a spot in the grand final up for the grabs, Sandringham dug deep in the final quarter to maintain composure and respond to every challenge thrown at them by the spirited Chargers team.

Coach Jeremy Barnard described the win as one of "great character".

"[The boys] could have easily rolled over when they were under significant pressure

[from Oakleigh]," he said post-match.

"The players played the Dragons brand of football ... [they] gave [themselves] the best chance [they] could and played fearless football.

"I couldn't be more proud of them," he said.

Talent manager Ryan O'Connor echoed similar sentiments saying post-match that the Dragons continue to show great character and stand up when it is needed most.

Seb Williams told TAC Cup Radio after the game that "everyone gave an even contribution" in order to progress through to the Grand Final.

"To get a win in the prelim everyone had to step up and everyone had to play their role that's why we got through today," he said post-match.

"Its great to play with these boys, the team is really strong and it lifts you to play better and makes it easy for you to play.

"We've had a theme to take on what the opposition throw at us and respond accordingly and we did that today ... we will go into the grand final with the same attitude we had today."

Bottom-ager Ben King was named Fin-Fitness best player after a strong game in defense where he gathered 20 disposals and four rebound 50s. King was a pillar of the Dragons defensive unit, collecting 10 marks and positioning himself as an imposing intercept player.

In the post-match presentation, Barnard described King as a player with a lot of talent and tremendous upside.

"I have been really hard on him and will continue to be but he is really coming into his own."

Speaking with TAC Cup Radio after the game Ben King said it was "really pleasing" to see the boys efforts paying off with a grand final berth.

"The boys have worked really hard all year and to see that hard work rewarded with a grand final is really pleasing and the boys played really well today," he told Rick Morris.

"Full respect to Oakleigh they are a great team and they threw everything at us and even more respect to the [Dragons] boys for holding them off."

King attributed his best-on-ground performance to the other defenders being able to take the key forwards.

"A few of the other boys took the big key forwards which allowed me to run off and intercept but I couldn't have done it without the other boys."

Midfielder Andrew Brayshaw was awarded the Sportsmart coaches award after a solid four-quarter contribution in which he gathered 25 disposals, seven tackles, six clearances and five inside 50s.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Sandringham Dragons	1.3	6.6	10.8	14.8 (92)
Oakleigh Chargers	1.2	3.3	9.3	13.5 (83)

Goal Kickers: H. Brayshaw 2, A. Jarnestrom 2, A. Trusler 2, E. Newman, S. Williams, M. King, W. Walker, A. Styles, J. Amartey, A. Brayshaw, K. Owens

Best Players: A. Brayshaw, B. Smith, B. King, J. Amartey, A. Styles, H. Brayshaw

GRAND FINAL

Determined Dragons defeated by Falcons



The Geelong Falcons have won their first TAC Cup premiership in 17 years after they defeated the Sandringham Dragons in a grand final thriller at Etihad Stadium on Sunday night.

The Dragons started the game slowly with the Falcons piling on the first three goals of the game before small forward Aaron Trusler put Sandringham on the board and into the game. At quarter time Sandringham were just three-points down, with late goals to Hayden McLean and Hamish Brayshaw keeping the Dragons in it early.

The quarter time message from the coaches, for the boys to keep playing their brand of Dragons football with a never say die attitude, resonated with Sandringham as they burst out the blocks in the second quarter to pile on four of the first five goals and take a healthy 20-point lead into halftime.

With the game on the line, the Falcons came out firing in the third quarter,

keeping Sandringham scoreless and kicking eight goals of their own. 2017 AFL Draft prospect Gryan Miers asserted himself as one to watch come November's draft kicking four of his seven goals in the premiership quarter.

In true Sandringham Dragons fashion, they entered the fourth quarter giving their all to bring the cup home. Kai Owens was prolific up forward kicking three clutch goals to give Sandringham hope with 10 minutes remaining. The last 10 minutes of the quarter was a scramble with neither team able to impact the scoreboard and close out the game. In the final passage of play,

the Dragons had a shot for goal but missed, handing Geelong their first premiership in 17 years and Falcons coach Daniel O'Keefe the premiership in his first season at the helm.

Gryan Miers was named best on ground his seven goal and 16 disposals outing, whilst Sandringham ruckman Joel Amartey was named the Fin-Fitness best-on-ground for the Dragons after dominating the ruck contests with 27 hitouts, to go with his 11 disposals, six tackles and four inside 50s.

16-year-old Bailey Smith was also prolific for the Dragons across, gathering a team-high 25 disposals, six tackles and five rebound 50s.

Midfield Andrew Brayshaw continued his strong finish to the season being named the Sportsmart coaches player after gathering 21 disposals, a game-high 10 tackles, six marks and four inside 50s.

The coaching staff emphasized post match how proud they were of the Dragons efforts in the grand final and over the season irrespective of not quite getting there, saying the way the boys competed to the end and were able to handle themselves under adversity whilst upholding the values of the Dragons was a testament to who they are as young men.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Sandringham Dragons	3.1	9.3	9.3	13.9 (87)
Geelong Falcons	3.4	5.7	13.9	13.11(89)

Goal Kickers: K. Owens 3, C. Constable 2, W. Walker 2, H. Brayshaw, J. Amartey, H. Mclean, M. King, A. Jarnestrom, A. Trusler

Best Players: J. Amartey, A. Brayshaw, C. Constable, W. Walker, H. Mclean, K. Owens

GRAND FINAL SQUAD

GRAND FINAL VS GEELONG FALCONS

B 2. G. Nagle De La Salle 33. H. Persson De La Salle 37. B. Smith Xavier College

HB 6. C. Constable Haileybury 70. B. King Haileybury 74. N. Murphy Brighton Grammar

C 22. Q. Montanaro Old Brighton 8. W. Walker Hampton Rovers 10. A. Styles Caulfield Grammar

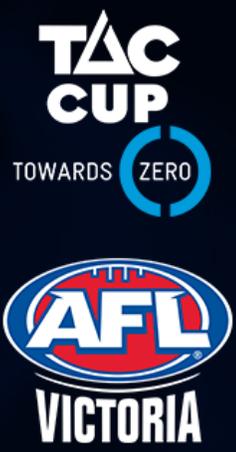
HF 15. A. Jarnestrom Brighton Grammar 30. H. McLean St Bedes College/ Beaumaris 5. S. Williams Brighton Grammar

F 1. L. Harris Caulfield Grammar 61. M. King Haileybury 20. K. Owens Mentone Grammar

23rd player
58. A. Richards
St Kevins College

Extended Interchange
12. J. Hille
Caulfield Grammar
7. A. Trusler
De La Salle
3. L. Barrett
St Bedes College/
Beaumaris
24. S. Cameron
Melbourne Grammar
28. I. Morrisby
Caulfield Grammar
26. S. Sofronidis
Collegians
13. J. Gorman
St Bedes College/
Beaumaris
25. M. Lohan
Old Brighton

Followers
29. J. Amartey
Mentone Grammar
9. A. Brayshaw
Haileybury
11. H. Brayshaw
Old Haileybury



Sunday 24/09 at 7:35pm
Etihad Stadium, Docklands

2017 HOME-AND-AWAY LADDER

1.	OAKLEIGH CHARGERS	60
2.	GEELONG FALCONS	60
3.	DANDENONG STINGRAYS	48
4.	SANDRINGHAM DRAGONS	44
5.	MURRAY BUSHRANGERS	40
6.	EASTERN RANGES	36
7.	NORTHERN KNIGHTS	30
8.	GIPPSLAND POWER	32
9.	CALDER CANNONS	24
10.	WESTERN JETS	24
11.	GWV REBELS	22
12.	BENDIGO PIONEERS	12

BEST AND FAIREST



Defender Geordie Nagle was crowned the Sandringham Dragons best-and-fairest player on Saturday night in front of over 100 players, family and Dragons staff members at Sandy by the Bay.

Nagle took home the award after polling 36 votes across the season, with midfielders Quintin Montanaro and Will Walker rounding out the top three with 34 and 31 votes, respectively.

Nagle played 18 out of a possible 21 matches for the Dragons this season after missing the first three games through injury. He averaged a team-high 26.2 disposals, 6.1 marks, 4.9 rebound 50s and 4.2 tackles.

For the first time since Liam Sumner in 2011, a player polled five out of a possible five votes in a game when Hamish Brayshaw was rewarded for his clear best on ground performance against the Northern Knights in round 18. Brayshaw kicked five goals and

gathered 30 disposals to go with his 11 tackles, eight marks, eight clearances and five inside 50s.

Other major award winners on the night included Bailey Smith being awarded the Best First Year Player, Joel Amartey as the Most Improved and Sam Sofronidis as the Coaches Award.

TAC Cup squad award winners

Best and fairest winner

Geordie Nagle

Best and fairest runner-up

Quintin Montanaro

Best and fairest third place

Will Walker

Coaches award

Sam Sofronidis

Most improved

Joel Amartey

Best 1st year player

Bailey Smith

Honest efforts award

Alfie Jarnestrom and Andrew Brayshaw

Fiercest dragon

Geordie Nagle

Player of the finals

Andrew Brayshaw and Joel Amartey

2017 AWARD WINNERS

Each week the Sandringham Dragons, in alignment with Sportsmart and Fin Fitne\$\$, name a Best on Ground and Coaches Award player recognising on-field achievement for the player who embodies the Dragons values.



Round one versus Oakleigh Chargers

Best on ground: Quintin Montanaro

Coaches award: Hayden McLean

Round two versus Northern Knights

Best on ground: Andrew Brayshaw

Coaches award: Lucas Barrett

Round three versus Western Jets

Best on ground: Kai Owens

Coaches award: Bailey Smith

Round four versus Dandenong Stingrays

Best on ground: Lucas Barrett

Coaches award: Hamish Brayshaw

Round five versus Gippsland Power

Best on ground: Quintin Montanaro

Coaches award: James Mangoni

Round six versus Bendigo Pioneers

Best on ground: Hamish Brayshaw

Coaches award: Julian Howard

Round seven versus Murray Bushrangers

Best on ground: Hamish Brayshaw

Coaches award: Jack Denborough

Round eight versus GWV Rebels

Best on ground: Hayden McLean

Coaches award: Sam Sofronidis

Round nine versus Eastern Ranges

Best on ground: Quintin Montanaro

Coaches award: Geordie Nagle

Round 10 versus Calder Cannons

Best on ground: Will Walker

Coaches award: Josh Gibbins

Round 11 versus Geelong Falcons

Best on ground: Angus Styles

Coaches award: Joel Amartey

Round 12 versus Gippsland Power

Best on ground: Alfie Jarnestrom

Coaches award: Geordie Nagle

Round 13 versus Bendigo Pioneers

Best on ground: Nathan Murphy

Coaches award: Charlie Constable

Round 14 versus Western Jets

Best on ground: Will Walker

Coaches award: Aaron Trusler

Round 15 versus Eastern Ranges

Best on ground: Will Walker

Coaches award: Ed Newman

Round 16 versus Oakleigh Chargers

Best on ground: Andrew Brayshaw

Coaches award: Howard Persson

Round 17 versus Bendigo Pioneers

Best on ground: Angus Styles

Coaches award: Ed Newman

Round 18 versus Northern Knights

Best on ground: Hamish Brayshaw

Coaches award: Joel Amartey

Elimination final versus Murray Bushrangers

Best on ground: Alfie Jarnestrom

Coaches award: Quintin Montanaro

Preliminary final versus Oakleigh Chargers

Best on ground: Ben King

Coaches award: Andrew Brayshaw

Grand final versus Geelong Falcons

Best on ground: Joel Amartey

Coaches award: Andrew Brayshaw

VIC METRO REPRESENTATIVES



Congratulations to the following Sandringham Dragons players selected in the victorious 2017 Vic Metro under-18 Squad to play at the NAB AFL Under 18 Championships:

Andrew Brayshaw
Ben King

Charlie Constable
Hayden McLean

Max King
Angus Styles

As well as valued Dragons staff members Ian Penn, Jackson Kornberg and Jake Collings.



TAC CUP

TEAM OF THE YEAR

The 2017 TAC Cup Team of the Year was announced at this year's Morrish Medal held in mid-September.

This year the Dragons were solely represented by mid-fielder Charlie Constable, who was named on the interchange bench after a successful season and prominent National Championships campaign.

Constable averaged 20.9 disposals, 5.4 marks and 2.4 tackles across his 10 games for the Dragons.

B	Ben Paton Murray Bushrangers	Mitch Podhajski Calder Cannons	Joel Garner Eastern Ranges
HB	Hunter Clark Dandenong Stingrays	Oscar Clavarino Dandenong Stingrays	Nick Coffield Northern Knights
C	Lachlan Fogarty Western Jets	James Worpel Geelong Falcons	Patrick Naish Northern Knights
HF	Jaidyn Stephenson Eastern Ranges	Noah Balta Calder Cannons	Luke Davies-Uniacke Dandenong Stingrays
F	Gryan Miers Geelong Falcons	Cameron Rayner Western Jets	Jack Higgins Oakleigh Chargers
FOLL	Sam Hayes Eastern Ranges	Adam Cerra Eastern Ranges	Paddy Dow Bendigo Pioneers
INTER	Charlie Constable Sandringham Dragons	David Handley Geelong Falcons	Lloyd Meek GWV Rebels
	Callum Porter Gippsland Power	Cassidy Parish Geelong Falcons	Dylan Moore Eastern Ranges

Coach: Leigh Brown – Gippsland Power



DRAFT COMBINE

This year 17 Sandringham Dragons players were invited to test at the National, State and Rookie Me combines held in October at Etihad Stadium.

Andrew Brayshaw, Charlie Constable, Hayden McLean, Nathan Murphy, Angus Styles and William Walker were among the 83 players to be invited to the National Combine event.

Invites to the National Combine were handed out on the basis that at least four clubs have expressed interest in the aforementioned players. Each potential draftee was split into groups based on their playing position and competed in a series of tests designed to challenge their endurance, reflexes, speed and skills to determine their strengths and weaknesses as a player.

Joel Amartey, Sam Cameron, Jackson Hille, Quintin Montanaro, Geordie Nagle, Ed Newman, Kai Owens, Seb Williams, Hamish Brayshaw, Lachlan Harris and Aaron Trusler were among the 96 players from around Australia invited to the State and Rookie Me combines.

Players received at least two expressions of interest from AFL clubs making them eligible for an invitation to the combine.

For the TAC Cup Girls, Izzy Huntington and Georgia Ricardo were invited to the inaugural girls combine events, also held at Etihad Stadium in October.



U16's

This year's Sandringham Dragons u/16 Academy Squad started their program in late November 2016 and culminated in the September carnival where the boys play games and then a group are selected and invited to join the 2017/18 u/18s preseason program.

However, before the boys got to September a lot of work was put in place to get those lucky enough to be invited into the 18's pre-season program, to ensure they were ready for the rigors of a three day a week program. One of the main roles of the u/16 program is to ensure that those players invited have the right attitude and commitment to be able to cope with the extra workloads and the expectation joining the tac cup u/18 program entails.

In late November, a squad of approximately 75 boys started the program. One of the requirements of the program is to initially pick a squad of thirty (30) players to participate in the AFL Victoria Metro Championships which are held during the Easter school holidays.

The boys that represented the Dragons in the 2017 AFL Vic Metro championships were -

JORDAN EVANS
MILES BERGMAN
RILEY VIRTUE
JAMES EADIE
LOUIS BUTLER
JAI FLORENT
HUNTAR PACE
WILLIAM MACKAY
LACHLAN LAMBLE
JACK MAHONY
JACKSON VOSS
GEORGE GREY
NICHOLAS BURKE
RILEY MILHAIOVIC
SAM KRISTENSEN

JACK BELL
ANDREW COURTNEY
COREY WATTS
FISCHER MCASEY
CHARLIE DEAN
KYLE YORKE
JACKSON HANNAH
TOM DEANE-JONES
LIAM WITTS
KYA AUSTIN
JACQUIN MIFSUD
MATTHEW SCOTT
FINN MAGINNESS
HUGO RALPHSMITH
JEHTT BRAZIONIS



U16's continued

The team played two games in the carnival against the Eastern Ranges and the Western Jets.

SANDRINGHAM DRAGONS 10.11 (71) def by EASTERN RANGES 11.6 (72)

Sandringham Dragons:

Best: Jack Mahony, Fischer McAsey, Jacquin Mifsud, Jack Bell, Andrew Courtney

Goals: Jackson Hannah 3, Fischer McAsey 2, George Grey, Kyle Yorke, Jack Mahony, Finn Macginness, Louis Butler

WESTERN JETS 6.14 (50) def by SANDRINGHAM DRAGONS 11.12 (78)

Sandringham Dragons:

Best: Liam Witts, Charlie Dean, Jack Mahony, Andrew Courtney, Matthew Scott

Goals: Kyle York 2, Jackson Hannah 2, Riley Milhailovic, Sam Kristensen, Charlie Dean, Riley Virtue, Finn Maginness, George Grey, Miles Bergman

At the conclusion of the championships twelve (12) Sandringham Dragons players were selected in the initial Vic Metro u/16s squad. Only Oakleigh Chargers had more representatives (13 in total) than the Dragons.

The Dragons representatives in the Vic Metro squad were JACK MAHONY, FINN MAGINNESS, CHARLIE DEAN, LIAM WITTS, ANDREW COURTNEY, FISCHER MCASEY, KYLE YORKE, JACKSON HANNAH, MILES BERGMAN, GEORGE GREY, JACQUIN MIFSUD and JACK BELL.

Following a series of training sessions and practice matches the final Vic Metro u/16 squad was selected and the Sandringham Dragons were represented by in the final Vic u/16 team by JACK MAHONY, FINN MAGINNESS, CHARLIE DEAN, LIAM WITTS, ANDREW COURTNEY, FISCHER MCASEY with KYLE YORKE and JACKSON HANNAH being named emergencies.

The Vic Metro u/16 championships were held in Queensland in July and following some outstanding performances JACK MAHONY and FISCHER MCASEY were both selected in the AFL Level 1 Academy with ANDREW COURTNEY named in the Academy Development Squad. Both Jack and Fischer will travel to New Zealand in April 2018 as part of the AFL Level 1 Academy Program where they will train and play as well as attending a dawn service in Wellington.

All of the 75 boys did a fantastic job and hopefully they were able to take something away from the experience.

STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

OFFICE STAFF

Talent Manager
Football & Operations Manager
Football & Operations assistant/ Girls Team Manager/ Statistician
Media officer
TAC Girls Academy Manager
Property Steward
Local Football Liason Officer

Ryan O'Connor
Toby Jedwab
Jeremy Gordon
Kavisha Di Pietro
Liana Brown
John Wood
Jim Lansdown

FOOTBALL STAFF

TAC Cup Head Coach
Assistant Coach - Midfield
Assistant Coach - Forwardline/ U16 Assistant
Assistant Coach - Backline/ U16 Assistant
Assistant Coach - Bottom Age
Game Day Football Manager
Runner
Statistician

Jeremy Barnard
Jackson Kornberg
Brad Berry
Mick Lovejoy
Fraser Cameron
Ian Penn

Junior Talent Pathway Coordinator
Junior Talent Pathways Assistant

Tim Cosgriff

Mark Cooke
Kenny Johnston

U16 Junior Development Coach

Stephen Nash

U15 Head Coach/ U15 Program Coordinator
U15 Assistant Coach

Mick Roberts
Lou Folino

U14 Head Coach/ U14 Program Coordinator
U14 Assistant Coach
U14 Assistant Coach

Steve Walton
Lou Colella
Aldo Mangoni

TAC Cup Girls Head Coach
TAC Girls Assistant Coach - Backline
TAC Girls Assistant Coach - Forwards
TAC Girls Assistant Coach - Midfield
TAC Girls Development Coach/ Runner

Leanne Gill
Raphael Udarbe
Danny Byrne
Rosie Dillon
Belinda Bowey

STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

MEDICAL

Doctor

Physiotherapist

Sport Psychologist

Robert Vorich

Peter Thomas

Melissa Weinberg

STRENGTH & CONDITIONING (S&C)

U18 High Performance Manager

U18 S&C Coach

U18 S&C Coordinator

U18 Rehabilitation Coordinator

TAC Girls Rehabilitation Coordinator/ U18 Assistant

Nathan Rogers

Bennett Tucker

Jake Collings

Tarryn Fisher

Baelee Kireka-Mark

U16 S&C Coordinator

U16 Rehab Coordinator/ U18 Assistant

Lilly Waisberg

Rebecca Herft

U14/15 S&C Coordinator

Lachlan Butler

Nutritionist

Toni Hamilton

Trainers

Head Trainer

Trainer

Trainer

Trainer

Hans Harms

Zoe Diamond

Lynda Britten

Chantal D'Andrea

U16 Head Trainer

U16 Head Trainer

Robert Taylor

Ian Cawthorne

TAC Girls Head Trainer

Honni Rooney

MAJOR PARTNERS

Volvo Cars
Brighton



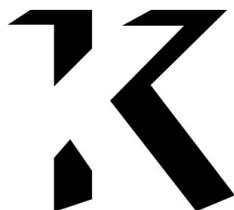
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Altitude Volvo's mission is to provide a seamless, enjoyable customer experience at every opportunity. This will ensure your Volvo ownership is definitely rated at the - Highest level!



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Krongold Constructions (Aust) is Melbourne's foremost construction specialist.

The Krongold Group build a significant percentage of Melbourne's \$600million, premium residential market alongside iconic commercial developments. Our clients demand perfection and for over 60 years we've delivered just that, with a depth of experience and knowledge that earns us the trust and confidence of an entire industry.

MAJOR PARTNERS



Progressclaim.com bridges the gap between multiple organisations and stakeholders, by providing an easy-to-use, real-time, online collaboration platform.

Developed specifically around construction needs, it works by allowing contract parties to collaborate on a neutral platform, eliminating the need for endless spreadsheet reconciliations, email trails and heated phone calls.

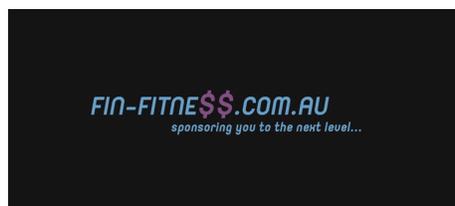


The origins of our bank began more than 150 years ago in two great Australian communities, Bendigo in Victoria and Adelaide in South Australia.

Bendigo Bank and Adelaide Bank each started out as building societies, driven to help Australians buy their own home.

Bendigo and Adelaide Bank is now a top 60 ASX listed company, owned by more than 90,000 shareholders. We have more than 6,500 employees, who serve about 1.5 million customers in over 500 communities Australia-wide.

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FOOTBALL PARTNERS



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GENERATION



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METRO
JUNIOR**
FOOTBALL LEAGUE

DRAGONS IN THE AFL

AFL debutants



Andrew McGrath, Essendon Pick #1

Debut: Round one

Games: 21

Average disposals: 20

Average marks: 4

Average tackles: 3

Goals: 1.1

The Number 1 AFL Draft pick from last year and best on ground in the 2016 TAC Cup Grand Final slotted straight into Essendon's line-up to make his AFL debut in round one. Playing all but two games in Essendon's home-and-away campaign and becoming a staple of Essendon's half-back line, McGrath received his first taste of finals in his debut-season. McGrath capped off a stellar year in the AFL, winning the NAB Rising Star award.

Tim Taranto, GWS Giants Pick #2

Debut: Round one

Games: 14

Average disposals: 15

Average marks: 2

Average tackles: 4

Goals: 7.4

Making his AFL debut in round one, Taranto gave GWS Giants fans something to be excited about. A mid-season ankle injury came at a shocking time for the tough draftee, who was starting to have a real impact across half-forward but he showed a cool head in his two finals.



Will Setterfield, GWS Giants pick #5

Debut: Round 19

Games: 2

Average disposals: 9

Average marks: 3

Average tackles: 5

Goals: 0.2

Setterfield was hampered with injury early during his time at the Giants but recovered to make his AFL debut in their loss to Richmond.





Jack Scrimshaw, Gold Coast Suns Pick #7

Debut: Round 18

Games: 4

Average disposals: 10

Average marks: 4

Average tackles: 1

After an injury-affected pre-season, Scrimshaw spent some time playing in the NEAFL before earning his AFL debut against the Western Bulldogs. Scrimshaw was fortunate enough to play in the NEAFL finals, where Gold Coast made it through to the preliminary final.

Oliver Florent, Sydney Swans Pick #11

Debut: Round one

Games: 9

Average disposals: 10

Average marks: 2

Average tackles: 2

Goals: 4.1

The Sydney Swans saw plenty in the speedy midfield-forward when he was selected with Pick 11 in last year's draft. Florent managed nine AFL games during the regular season and when playing at NEAFL level maintained a high level of consistency to exceed expectations in his debut season.



Cameron Polson, Carlton Pick #59

Debut: round five

Games: 1

Average disposals: 11

Average score involvements: 3

Average tackles: 2

Goals: 0.1

Polson paved his way in the VFL before debuting against Port Adelaide in round five. Polson played 10 matches for the Northern Blues in the VFL for 2017 but was restricted to one AFL match with a shoulder injury hampering his debut season.



DRAGONS IN THE AFL

McGrath gets Rising Star nod



THERE was never any doubt that Andrew McGrath was going to be drafted last year, but this silky prospect wanted more.

McGrath, 18, hungered to be the No.1 pick – and generally whatever he sets his mind to he achieves, as he did again when Essendon made him the dux of the 2016 draft class. In doing so, the 178cm defender became the Bombers' first-ever top draft choice.

McGrath has played all four games, saving his best so far for Saturday night when he had 28 disposals, four tackles and five scoring involvements in a loss to the Crows.

"It's a massive honour, and towards the end of the year I really wanted to get that title of being the No.1 pick," the round four NAB AFL Rising Star nominee told AFL.com.au.

"I'm usually pretty competitive. I know it's just a number, but it was on my

mind a little bit – I wanted to have that title and that responsibility.

"I guess you want to have that pressure, you wouldn't rather be anywhere else ... so why be afraid of the pressure?"

McGrath has discussed his draft perch with Essendon clubmate Brendon Goddard, the 2002 No.1 selection, and followed in fellow ex-Brighton Grammar School student Jack Watts's 2008 footsteps.

Goddard's advice was simple: listen only to feedback within Bomberland and don't let outsiders impact on your feelings or performance.

McGrath, who moved to Australia from Canada with his family when he was five, made a compelling case last year to be considered the best teenager in the country.

The Sandringham Dragons star aver-

aged 32 disposals in the TAC Cup, co-captained Victoria Metro and won its MVP en route to the under-18 Division One title, and won All Australian honours. He was also Brighton Grammar's school captain and football vice-captain under Robert Shaw, a former VFL/AFL footballer and coach.

But football wasn't McGrath's certain future until three years ago, when the triple national champion hurdler ended a promising track-and-field career.

"My parents always said to pick the one where my heart lies, because I'll try harder and want to be more successful in that field," he said.

"I wrestled with it for months and it was really hard in the end. I had doubts and regrets even a bit early, but it's all worked out now and I'm happy with the decision."

McGrath is revelling in the "new vibe" at Tullamarine, as the dark cloud that was the supplements saga subsides. He will always be connected to it as the reward at the end of those tough times, but is most focused on the future and the club's ability to do "something special".

For the moment, McGrath still appreciates living with his parents at their East Brighton home and enjoying the perks of being an 18-year-old kid.

"It's a bit of a trek out to training each day, but the advantages outweigh the drive – I love being at home," he said.

"It makes everything a bit easier; just having my family there and everything that's important to me – I can escape footy a little bit and switch off, which is nice sometimes."

DRAGONS IN THE AFL

Rising Star earns stripes



Walking into the Greater Western Sydney headquarters for the first time was a “frightening” experience for teenage hotshot Tim Taranto.

The Sandringham Dragons’ TAC Cup premiership star flew up AFL draft boards with a withering finish to the season, and eventually only Essendon’s Andrew McGrath was taken before him.

Not even the confidence boost that came with being the No.2 pick in the 2016 NAB AFL Draft could spare Taranto from jangling nerves as he faced his new teammates.

“It was pretty daunting ... you walk in the doors and there are all these people staring at you, so it’s pretty scary,” Taranto told AFL.com.au.

“But after a few weeks, you get comfortable and everything starts to get a bit easier. It’s definitely a frightening, but excit-ing experience at the start.

“All you can do is work as hard as you can to try and earn that respect of the group, so you just rock up, try and be a good bloke, and work your butt off and see where it gets you.”

Taranto, 19, made an instant AFL debut in round one, has played all bar one match – he was rested in round five – and is the round eight NAB AFL Rising Star nominee.

The nomination was a long time coming and followed a game where he gathered 21 disposals, including 10 contested, laid five tackles and had six score involvements.

That hard edge, plus his ability to be equally effective in the midfield as up forward, was what made him such an attractive proposition for GWS.

Taranto’s support network stretches to the other side of the world, with his father, Phillip, living in Dallas, Texas.

The Giants young gun’s parents

separated when he was two years old and his dad returned to the United States. His mother, Jess, raised him in Melbourne.

Taranto, who played junior football for Mordialloc-Braeside, has travelled to the US “15 or 16 times” and retains a close relationship with his father, who was in Adelaide to watch his son’s AFL debut and is a GWS international member.

“He gets to watch all the games online and he’s definitely learning the game,” Taranto said.

“He didn’t know what a disposal was before the season started, but I think he’s picking up on it pretty quickly. He’s loving it.”

Taranto still speaks almost daily to his mother, but is becoming increasingly comfortable in the harbour city and at AFL level.

“Finally getting me out of the house is probably good for her. She’s been to every game, so I still see her a fair bit and talk to her most days,” he said.

“At first it was pretty hard living out of home and adapting to a new lifestyle and all that, but it’s definitely getting a lot easier and I’m really enjoying it now. I’m trying to be a man.”

DRAGONS GOING PLACES

Dragons in the VFL grand final

32 former TAC Cup players took to the field for either Port Melbourne or Richmond in the Peter Jackson VFL 'Love the Game' Grand Final, which proved to be an exhilarating curtain raiser to the TAC Cup Grand Final with Port Melbourne winning the Premiership Cup. Of the 32, three were former Dragons.

Port Melbourne:

Anthony Anastasio
Ash Krakauer

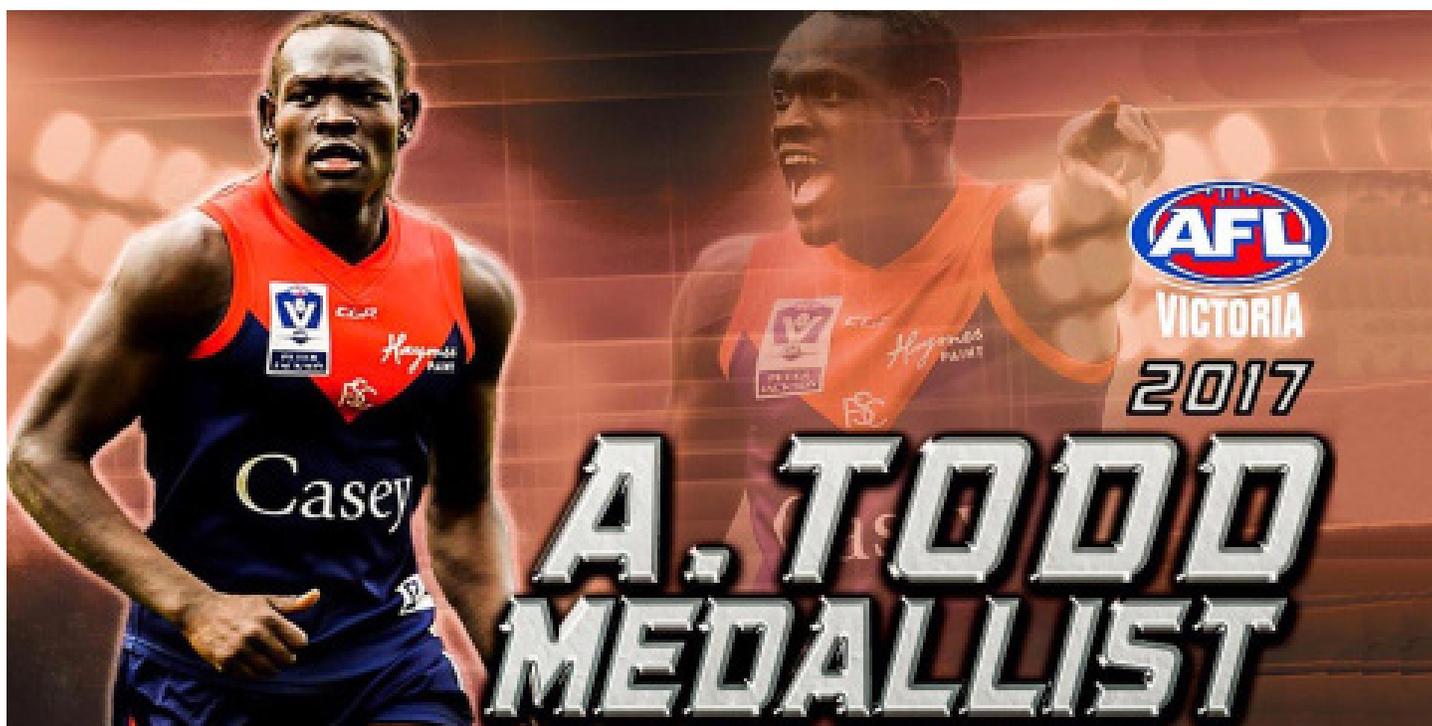
Richmond:

Taylor Hunt



DRAGONS GOING PLACES

Lok named A. Todd medallist



Casey's Bayley Fritsch has been awarded the Fothergill-Round Medal for the best young VFL player in 2017.

Fritsch played 19 matches for the Demons this year and finished the season with 42 goals, with only Port Melbourne's Jordan Lisle (51 goals) and Collingwood's Kayke Kirby (43) kicking more in 2017. Richmond's Ben Lennon also kicked 42 goals.

He also represented Victoria against Western Australian in state football.

The 20-year-old, 186cm half-forward flanker is regarded as one of the brightest prospects in the VFL.

Fritsch, originally from Coldstream, was also named on the half-forward flank in the 2017 VFL Team of the Year.

Since the medal was first awarded in 1989 – named after football greats

Des Fothergill and Barry Round – three players have won it, who have later played for Melbourne. They were Aaron Davey (2003), Shane Valenti (2007) and Michael Hibberd (2010).

Another three players, Bruce Cohen (1994), Paul Dooley (1996) and Adam Fisher (2004) also played reserves for Melbourne/Sandringham (then Melbourne's VFL affiliate).

Meanwhile, midfielder Goy Lok won the 2017 A. Todd Medal for the best and fairest in the AFL Victoria Development League.

Lok, 19, came from the Sandringham Dragons, where he also had a taste in the VFL with Sandringham Zebras last year.

The emerging Lok will be the last player to have won the award, with the Development League set to finish after this weekend's Grand

Final between Casey Demons and Williamstown at Fortburn Stadium (North Port Oval), Port Melbourne.

In the VFLW, five Melbourne AFLW players were named in the VFL Women's Team of the Year.

They were Richelle Cranston (wing), Melissa Hickey (centre half-back), Lily Mithen (half forward-flank), Karen Paxman (half-back flank) and Daisy Pearce (forward pocket).

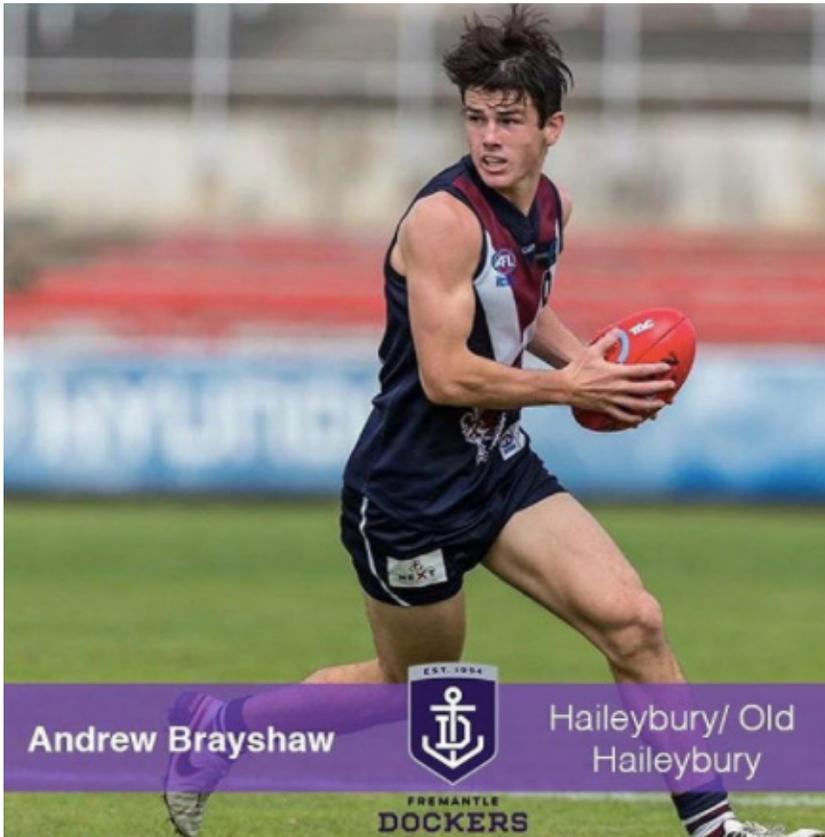
Former Melbourne AFLW player Sarah Jolly was also named in the forward pocket.

Paxman was also the highest vote getter in the women's best and fairest award. She finished equal fifth with 11 votes.

Katherine Smith polled 10 votes and Cranston, Mithen and Pearce gained nine each.

Matt Burgan melbournefc.com.au

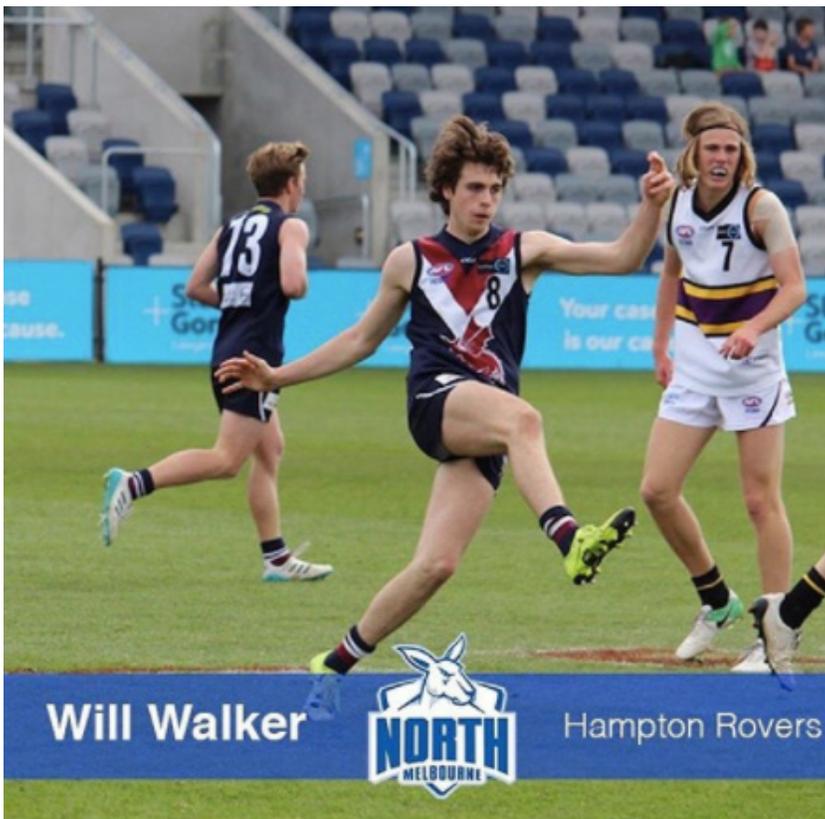
2017 NAB AFL DRAFT



Andrew Brayshaw
AFL Draft pick #2, Fremantle

Draft profile:

Another year, another Brayshaw. The brother of Melbourne's Angus and 2016 overlooked draft-ee Hamish, Andrew has had a stellar year at all levels. The strong leader is very vocal through the midfield and at breaks and is a fine leader. Brayshaw has played mostly as an inside midfielder, but has shown he can link up with the outside runners through the midfield and use the ball effectively inside 50. Despite missing the early part of the National Under 18 Championships with a quad injury, he was able to push his case for selection for the final two Victorian games, averaging 21 disposals with a kicking efficiency of 100 per cent. Brayshaw ranked number one in assists in the 2017 TAC Cup and has shown his skills being able to impact the games through the midfield.



Will Walker
AFL Draft pick #23, North Melbourne

Draft profile:

Six months ago many did not expect Will Walker to have the season that he did. The athletic half forward flanker had played more football with the round ball rather than the oval one – but continued to work on his game in 2017 showing constant improvement throughout the season. Walker averaged 20 disposals, four marks and four tackles this season in the 2017 TAC Cup and he was able impact the game, often using his speed and agility through the midfield.

2017 NAB AFL DRAFT



Charlie Constable
AFL Draft pick #36, Geelong Cats

Draft profile:

Charlie Constable has had a strong year at all levels, playing at either end of the ground or in as an inside midfielder. Standing at 190cm, Constable is the modern prototype of midfielders – where he wins the contested ball and dishes it out to teammates by hand with ease. In games filled with fumbles and skill errors throughout the National AFL Under 18 Championships, Constable was a class above – with his clean disposal and smarts on full show.



Nathan Murphy
AFL Draft pick #39, Collingwood

Draft profile:

Nathan Murphy's rise as an AFL Draft prospect was done behind the scenes, as a more public battle drew out over Will Sutherland and whether the dual-sport athlete would put football or cricket first. Fremantle was a club that first kept tabs on Murphy as a bottom-ager in 2016, but it was a performance for Brighton Grammar down at Geelong Grammar in May that changed everything. Murphy booted seven goals in a standout match up forward, at times matched up on likely first round draftee Jarrod Brander. The medium forward continued his rise throughout the APS school boy season, booting 27 goals. Murphy re-joined the Sandringham Dragons, finishing the season averaging 16.1 disposals from eight games, mixing between playing as a third tall at either end of the ground. Murphy is very raw, but marks the ball overhead well and continues to show improvement.

2017 NAB AFL DRAFT



Hamish Brayshaw
AFL Draft pick #68, West Coast Eagles

Draft profile:

Hamish Brayshaw is arguably one of the most readymade players in the 2017 draft. Naturally as an over-ager he has had an extra year of development and at 91kg is far too strong for many opponents in the TAC Cup. The knock was his unbelievable second half of the season for the Sandringham Dragons was because he was playing against much lighter players. In terms of his accumulation, strength and score-board impact, Brayshaw is top notch. But he lacks a yard of pace and a number of coaches and recruiters wondered whether he should have spent the year at state level testing himself against bigger bodies for the full season.

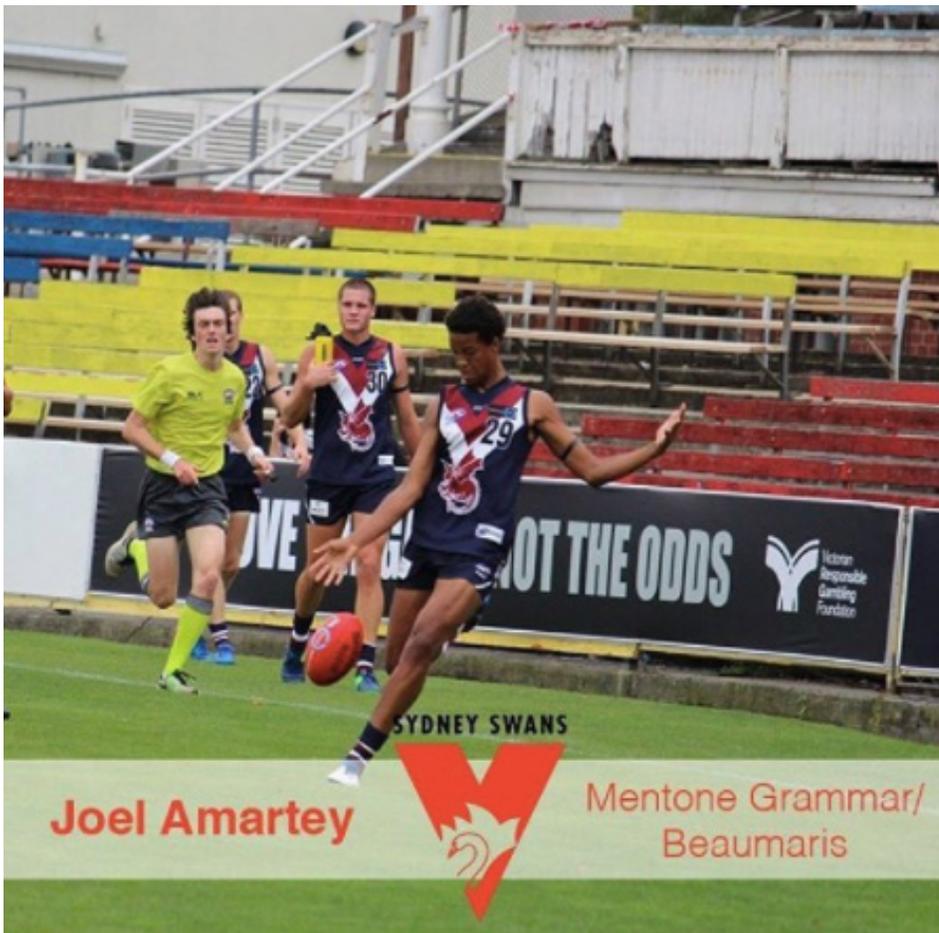


Angus Styles
AFL Rookie Draft pick #14, Sydney Swans

Draft profile:

Angus Styles has had a reasonable season with showing off some good traits at all levels for Vic Metro, Sandringham Dragons and for his school Caulfield Grammar. Styles can play as a half back flank and up on the wing, with one of his better games of the season coming for Sandringham Dragons with 33 disposals and five tackles against 2017 premiers Geelong Falcons back in Round 11. Styles is a hard worker and has good vision around the ground to get the ball off to teammates.

2017 NAB AFL DRAFT



Joel Amartej
AFL Rookie Draft pick #28, Sydney Swans

Draft profile:

The talented Joel Amartej has put together a consistent season for the Sandringham Dragons, particularly in the second half. He rotated between ruck and forward, showing off his huge vertical leap and athleticism. He has a few areas to iron out – including his goal kicking – but it would be surprising to not see him at least rookied given he has really good future scope.

Congratulations to the seven Dragons drafted in the 2017 NAB AFL National and Rookie Drafts.

2017 PLAYER PROFILES

Leadership group

Captain



30. Hayden McLean

Height: 197cm
Weight: 93kg
Local club: St Bede's
College/ Beaumaris
Games played: 16
Disposals: 13.1
Marks: 4.8
Tackles: 3.1
Goals: 14.17

Vice-captains



6. Charlie Constable

Height: 190cm
Weight: 83kg
Local club: Old Haileybury/
Haileybury
Games played: 10
Disposals: 20.9
Marks: 5.4
Tackles: 2.4
Goals: 10.3



3. Lucas Barrett

Height: 178cm
Weight: 73kg
Local club: St Bede's
College/ Beaumaris
Games played: 18
Disposals: 16.2
Marks: 2.4
Tackles: 4.5
Goals: 5.7

Leadership group



1. Lachlan Harris

Height: 170cm
Weight: 71kg
Local club: Caulfield
Grammar/ Caulfield
Grammarians
Games played: 13
Disposals: 15.0
Marks: 2.0
Tackles: 3.2
Goals: 7.4



8. Will Walker

Height: 187cm
Weight: 80kg
Local club: Hampton
Rovers
Games played: 19
Disposals: 20.5
Marks: 4.3
Tackles: 4.0
Goals: 22.16



9. Andrew Brayshaw

Height: 183cm
Weight: 80kg
Local club: Haileybury
Games played: 10
Disposals: 24.8
Marks: 4.0
Tackles: 6.6
Goals: 8.6



10. Angus Styles

Height: 185cm
Weight: 76kg
Local club: Caulfield
Grammar
Games played: 12
Disposals: 19.2
Marks: 4.5
Tackles: 4.9
Goals: 2.3



15. Alfie Jarnestrom

Height: 177cm
Weight: 69kg
Local club: Hampton
Rovers/ Brighton Grammar
Games played: 11
Disposals: 20.9
Marks: 4.6
Tackles: 4.1
Goals: 7.3

2017 PLAYER PROFILES

Playing group



2. Geordie Nagle
Height: 185cm
Weight: 79kg
Local club: De La Salle
Games played: 18
Disposals: 26.2
Marks: 6.1
Tackles: 4.1
Goals: 1



4. Ari Sakeson
Height: 193cm
Weight: 85kg
Local club: Old Brighton
Games played: 8
Disposals: 18.0
Marks: 6.5
Tackles: 3.4
Goals: 3.3



5. Seb Williams
Height: 179cm
Weight: 75kg
Local club: Hampton Rovers/ Brighton Grammar School
Games played: 12
Disposals: 23.5
Marks: 4.0
Tackles: 3.2
Goals: 10.9



7. Aaron Trusler
Height: 170cm
Weight: 69kg
Local club: De La Salle
Games played: 18
Disposals: 10.8
Marks: 2.5
Tackles: 2.3
Goals: 35.15



11. Hamish Brayshaw
Height: 187cm
Weight: 88kg
Local club: Old Haileybury
Games played: 11
Disposals: 24.6
Marks: 5.5
Tackles: 6.5
Goals: 16.7



12. Jackson Hille
Height: 188cm
Weight: 80kg
Local club: Ormond/ Caulfield Grammar School
Games played: 9
Disposals: 12.8
Marks: 2.9
Tackles: 2.6
Goals: 0.1



13. Josh Gorman
Height: 179cm
Weight: 75kg
Local club: Beaumaris
Games played: 13
Disposals: 17.2
Marks: 2.4
Tackles: 4.2
Goals: 6.5



14. Oscar Roberts
Height: 192cm
Weight: 78kg
Local club: Hampton Rovers
Games played: 7
Disposals: 9.1
Marks: 2.7
Tackles: 2.0



16. Alex Lowe
Height: 185cm
Weight: 80kg
Local club: Caulfield Grammar School



17. James Mangoni
Height: 184cm
Weight: 66kg
Local club: St Bedes College
Games played: 9
Disposals: 9.8
Marks: 2.6
Tackles: 4.1
Goals: 0.1



18. Nick Lloyd
Height: 186cm
Weight: 79kg
Local club: Dingley
Games played: 2
Disposals: 7.0
Marks: 0
Tackles: 0.5
Goals: 0



19. Julian Howard
Height: 179cm
Weight: 67kg
Local club: Parkdale/ Mentone Grammar
Games played: 2
Disposals: 16.0
Marks: 1
Tackles: 4.5
Goals: 2.1

2017 PLAYER PROFILES

Playing group



20. Kai Owens
Height: 192cm
Weight: 81kg
Local club: Beaumaris/
Mentone Grammar
Games played: 12
Disposals: 13.2
Marks: 3.0
Tackles: 2.7
Goals: 6.5



21. Brendan McCoy
Height: 179cm
Weight: 72kg
Local club: Parkdale
Games played: 2
Disposals: 8.0
Marks: 2.5
Tackles: 3.0
Goals: 1.0



22. Quintin Montanaro
Height: 187cm
Weight: 72kg
Local club: Old Brighton
Games played: 21
Disposals: 20.5
Marks: 5.2
Tackles: 3.8
Goals: 1.7



23. Devlin Brereton
Height: 183cm
Weight: 73kg
Local club: Beaumaris/
Mentone Grammar
Games played: 7
Disposals: 8.7
Marks: 2.6
Tackles: 2.9
Goals: 3.5



24. Sam Cameron
Height: 189cm
Weight: 72kg
Local club: Old
Melburnians/ Melbourne
Grammar
Games played: 4
Disposals: 17.5
Marks: 2.5
Tackles: 2.5
Goals: 1.1



25. Max Lohan
Height: 180cm
Weight: 74kg
Local club: Old Brighton
Games played: 14
Disposals: 19.1
Marks: 4.9
Tackles: 2.3
Goals: 3.3



26. Sam Sofronidis
Height: 193cm
Weight: 75kg
Local club: Collegians
Games played: 9
Disposals: 12
Marks: 2.2
Tackles: 3.4
Goals: 0.2



27. Jak Nardino
Height: 178cm
Weight: 75kg
Local club: Beaumaris
Games played: 2
Disposals: 17
Marks: 3.0
Tackles: 2.5
Goals: 0



28. Isaac Morrisby
Height: 192cm
Weight: 95kg
Local club: Caulfield
Grammarians/ Caulfield
Grammar School
Games played: 11
Disposals: 10.3
Marks: 3.6
Tackles: 1.9
Goals: 19.8



29. Joel Amartey
Height: 195cm
Weight: 85kg
Local club: Beaumaris/
Mentone Grammar
Games played: 14
Disposals: 11.9
Marks: 2.9
Tackles: 4.6
Goals: 9.4



31. Josh Gibbins
Height: 195cm
Weight: 81kg
Local club: Beaumaris
Games played: 10
Disposals: 7.5
Marks: 1.5
Tackles: 4.2
Goals: 2.1



32. Ethan Casey
Height: 200cm
Weight: 100kg
Local club: Ormond
Games played: 3
Disposals: 9.3
Marks: 2.3
Tackles: 1.7
Goals: 0.1

2017 PLAYER PROFILES

Playing group



33. Howie Persson
Height: 190cm
Weight: 88kg
Local club: De La Salle
Games played: 19
Disposals: 14.4
Marks: 4.0
Tackles: 2.3
Goals: 3.4



34. Barclay Miller
Height: 194cm
Weight: 90kg
Local club: St Kilda
Games played: 6
Disposals: 6.8
Marks: 2.2
Tackles: 3.2



35. Jacob Bakes
Height: 180cm
Weight: 72kg
Local club: Keysborough FC
Games played: 11
Disposals: 10.9
Marks: 2.5
Tackles: 4.5
Goals: 6.6



36. Jai Hale
Height: 191cm
Weight: 85kg
Local club: Parkdale
Games played: 8
Disposals: 11.4
Marks: 3.6
Tackles: 2.1
Goals: 4.1



37. Bailey Smith
Height: 183cm
Weight: 74kg
Local club: East Malvern/ Xavier
Games played: 12
Disposals: 24.2
Marks: 4.2
Tackles: 3.8
Goals: 0.2



38. Zak Straker
Height: 191cm
Weight: 90kg
Local club: Parkdale



39. Liam Stocker
Height: 182cm
Weight: 81kg
Local club: Haileybury/ Old Haileybury
Games played: 3
Disposals: 15.3
Marks: 1.7
Tackles: 5.0



40. Terry Patten
Height: 184cm
Weight: 87kg
Local club: Heatherton
Games played: 1
Disposals: 7
Marks: 3
Tackles: 1
Goals: 1



41. Troy Brimble
Height: 173cm
Weight: 72kg
Local club: Mordialloc-Braeside
Games played: 1
Tackles: 2



42. Anthony Seaton
Height: 184cm
Weight: 83kg
Local club: Ormond/ St Kevins College
Games played: 3
Disposals: 7.7
Marks: 0.3
Tackles: 2.7
Goals: 1

2017 PLAYER PROFILES

Playing group



43. Nicholas Stamatis
Height: 175cm
Weight: 70kg
Local club: Mordialloc-Braeside
Games played: 10
Disposals: 13.1
Marks: 2.5
Tackles: 4.3
Goals: 2.0



44. Adam Forbes
Height: 189cm
Weight: 70kg
Local club: Beaumaris
Games played: 3
Disposals: 9.0
Marks: 4.3
Tackles: 1.3
Goals: 1.1



45. Joel Crocker
Height: 188cm
Weight:
Local club: Brighton Grammar School/ Old Brighton
Games played: 5
Disposals: 16.4
Marks: 4.4
Tackles: .1.4
Goals: 1.3



46. Ryan Macdermid
Height: 186cm
Weight: 66kg
Local club: Mordialloc-Braeside
Games played: 7
Disposals: 8.4
Marks: 2.6
Tackles: 2.3
Goals: 4.3



47. Troy Denborough
Height: 176cm
Weight: 76kg
Local club: St Kilda City/ Melbourne Grammar School
Games played: 1
Disposals: 9
Marks: 3
Tackles: 2



48. Caleb Millar
Height: 185cm
Weight: 76kg
Local club: St Bedes Mentone
Games played: 2
Disposals: 7
Marks: 1
Tackles: 1
Goals: 0.1



49. Tom Fogarty
Height: 175cm
Weight: 65kg
Local club: Ormond
Games played: 2
Disposals: 9
Marks: 2.5
Tackles: 1.0
Goals: 0.1



50. Callum Jones
Height: 189cm
Weight: 77kg
Local club: Ormond/ St. Kevins College
Games played: 3
Disposals: 16.7
Marks: 3.7
Tackles: 3.0



51. Harry Houlahan
Height: 186cm
Weight: 67kg
Local club: Beaumaris
Games played: 2
Disposals: 12
Marks: 2.5
Tackles: 2.5



52. Ronan Ladds
Height: 184cm
Weight: 75kg
Local club: Beaumaris
Games played: 2
Disposals: 12
Marks: 3.5
Tackles: 3



53. Tristan Brunning
Height: 176cm
Weight: 70kg
Local club: Noble Park
Games played: 4
Disposals: 6.8
Marks: 2.0
Tackles: 1.8
Goals: 3.2



54. Ryan O'Meara
Height: 186cm
Weight: 73kg
Local club: Ormond

2017 PLAYER PROFILES

Playing group



55. Jesse Scholz
Height: 177cm
Weight: 74kg
Local club: Ormond



56. Dawit McNeish
Height: 176cm
Weight: 74kg
Local club: Beaumaris
Games played: 3
Disposals: 10.7
Marks: 2.0
Tackles: 4.3



57. Tom Long
Height: 160cm
Weight: 56kg
Local club: Mordialloc-Braeside
Games played: 3
Disposals: 10.7
Marks: 2.7
Tackles: .2.7
Goals: 3.0



58. Alastair Richards
Height: 186cm
Weight: 71kg
Local club: East Malvern/
St Kevins College
Games played: 5
Disposals: 11.4
Marks: 2.2
Tackles: 3.2
Goals: 3.1



59. William Kennedy
Height: 197cm
Weight: 80kg
Local club: Caulfield
Grammar School/ St Kilda
City
Games played: 2
Disposals: 9.5
Marks: 3
Tackles: 1.5
Goals: 1.0



60. James Rendell
Height: 196cm
Weight: 87kg
Local club: Mordialloc-Braeside
Games played: 4
Disposals: 7.5
Marks: 1.5
Tackles: 3.2
Goals: 1.0



61. Max King
Height: 201cm
Weight: 82
Local club: Haileybury/
Old Haileybury
Games played: 7
Disposals: 7.7
Marks: 3.4
Tackles: 1.3
Goals: 10.4



62. Nick De Bruin
Height: 186cm
Weight: 63kg
Local club: Beaumaris



63. Liam Danielis-Morley
Height: 177cm
Weight: 57kg
Local club: St Kilda City/
Xavier



64. Sam Forbes
Height: 185cm
Weight: 70kg
Local club: St Kilda City
Games played: 1
Disposals: 9



65. Adam Ossip
Height: 180cm
Weight: 73kg
Local club: Ormond



66. Josh Paul
Height: 190cm
Weight: 80kg
Local club: De La Salle
Games played: 6
Disposals: 7.7
Marks: 2.5
Tackles: .2.2
Goals: 1.0

2017 PLAYER PROFILES

Playing group



67. Oscar McMaster
Height: 177cm
Weight: 57kg
Local club: Beaumaris



68. Jake Turner
Height: 189cm
Weight: 92kg
Local club: Old Brighton



69. Jack Farrington
Height: 194cm
Weight: 88kg
Local club: Dingley
Games played: 2
Disposals: 5
Marks: 1.5
Tackles: 0.5
Goals: 0.1



70. Ben King
Height: 201cm
Weight: 79kg
Local club: Haileybury/ Old Haileybury
Games played: 9
Disposals: 13.7
Marks: 4.8
Tackles: 0.8
Goals: 0.1



71. Oscar Paulke
Height: 181cm
Weight: 75kg
Local club: St Kilda City
Games played: 1
Disposals: 8
Marks: 1.0
Tackles: 2.0



72. Sam Stynes
Height: 191cm
Weight: 79kg
Local club: Xavier/ Old Xavier
Games played: 1
Disposals: 13
Marks: 2.0
Tackles: 5.0

73. Ed Newman
Height: 183cm
Weight: 80kg
Local club: Mentone Grammar/ Beaumaris
Games played: 5
Disposals: 14.8
Marks: 2.8
Tackles: 2.4
Goals: 1.1



74. Nathan Murphy
Height: 188cm
Weight: 84kg
Local club: Brighton Grammar School/ East Sandringham
Games played: 8
Disposals: 16.1
Marks: 4.8
Tackles: 2.0
Goals: 3.4

PLAYER FOCUS

Nathan Murphy

Since rejoining the Sandringham Dragons TAC Cup program, 17-year-old swingman Nathan Murphy has set alight his chances of making it onto an AFL list at this year's NAB AFL National Draft.

In his breakout game for the Dragons against the Bendigo Pioneers in round 13, Murphy has recruiters' minds set firmly on officially converting the talented cricketer to a footballing future.

Murphy, who has been playing cricket since he was seven years old and football from the age of eight, kicked three goals in the victory to confidently cement himself as a hopeful during this year's draft period.

"Since then it has always been cricket in cricket season and footy in footy season," he said of his avid interest and commitment to both cricket and football.

Like his Victorian under-19 cricket teammate Will Sutherland, who chose to pursue a career in cricket recently, Murphy will be forced to make the tough decision come seasons end. However, he isn't fazed by the decision to come.

"I'm extremely passionate about both [sports] so to be in a position where I might have to pick one is a very lucky one," the Dragons swingman said.

"The aim for me is to play sport at the highest level so I will have to wait and see what is to come."

Murphy has been involved with the Dragons in the TAC Cup for a number of years, stepping out of the program to pursue cricket late last season before rejoining in the middle of the year.

Sandringham Dragons and Carlton AFLW assistant coach Jackson Kornberg said Murphy had been "terrific" since returning to the Dragons squad this year.

"Nath's been terrific for us since rejoining the program," he said.

"Since coming back he's shown a real capacity to learn and improve which I've been most impressed it.

"He constantly seeks feedback and has a real desire for improvement," Kornberg said of Murphy's commitment to training.

Murphy, who made his Dragons debut in round 11 against the Geelong Falcons, has slotted seamlessly into Sandringham's lineup. Initially playing as a defender, Murphy moved to a role up forward against the Bendigo Pioneers where he played his best game for the club.



"It's been great to be able to experience what it takes to play at both ends of the ground," he said.

"I have played my best footy for the Dragons up forward but I'm just happy to be getting a game for the club."

The 188cm swingman models his game on the likes of Tim Membrey and Harry Taylor, opting to use his height and versatility to advantage.

"With my body type I like to model my game on Tim Membrey who plays the third tall role for St Kilda. He backs himself to fly for marks when he has to but as soon as [the ball] hits the ground he is even more dangerous."

"The best part to my game is my ability to use my height. I'm classified as a medium sized player but because of my lanky arms and legs I'm able to contest for marks but be strong when the ball hits the ground.

Kornberg echoed Murphy's statements on his adaptability saying his ability to be a "versatile prospect" has added a new dimension to his game.

"[Against Bendigo] he had a really good aerial game, taking a few strong marks and kicking a few goals ... which is a must at the next level now."

His breakout season for both Brighton Grammar School (BGS) and the Dragons has earned Murphy an invite to this year's NAB AFL Draft combine to be held in October.

Murphy, who is currently studying year 12 at BGS, maintains a "level head" despite the increasing social media chatter about his capabilities at this year's draft.

"It's all a bit exciting ... but it's about keeping

a level head because at the end of the day the only thing that I can do is keep trying to play good footy and get a win for the Dragons.

"It's always good having a close group of mates who make sure I'm keeping my feet on the ground.

"When you start thinking about it too much that is when it starts affecting how you play ... it is all about staying in the moment and to just keep doing what I can control."

Outside of his busy life with cricket, football and VCE study, Murphy maintains he is like any other boy in year 12.

"I'm doing the same as most boys in year 12 ... I have a very close group of mates that I get along with really well, it's always good to get away from the struggles of year 12 and have a good laugh with them."

A keen surfer and golfer, he passes time at a holiday home in Jan Juc on the Bellarine Peninsula with family and friends.

"When I'm not playing sport or studying, I am playing more sport," he said.

Always the professional, Murphy has a clear-cut pre-game routine, which he follows religiously.

"For any game of footy I have pasta the night before ... I have the same breakfast of cereal with an up & go and yoghurt ... I like to wake up and be relaxed," he said.

"The only real superstition is that I have to run out last when coming out of the rooms ... it is a bit odd but if it could stay that way it would be much appreciated."

PLAYER FOCUS

Alfie Jarnestrom



For Sandringham Dragons midfielder Alfie Jarnestrom, his top-age year hasn't been entirely smooth sailing after missing out on Vic Metro selection and struggling with illness throughout the season. But the Brighton Grammar student is taking it all in his stride.

Working with the Dragons coaching staff and strength and conditioning team, Jarnestrom has focused on making the most out of his time with Sandringham.

"I thought I could either feel sorry for myself and nothing would change or I could go and seek some feedback on things I needed to improve," he said.

"In doing so, I set some goals with coaches and did extra sessions to make sure my weaknesses became my strengths and my strengths became even stronger."

The two-time Brighton Grammar best and fairest winner has transitioned from a role at half back in the APS competition, to a move into the midfield and forward line during his time playing in the TAC Cup; a move Jarnestrom says has been able to showcase his best attributes as a footballer.

"I feel like I'm the most comfortable at half back and midfield as I've been

playing there during my junior career and I feel like I can read the ball well (in that position).

"However, I have had the most impact as a forward and midfielder as that is where I can be the most damaging with my foot skills.

"I would say my composure (in games) and my decision-making are my best attributes," he said.

Sandringham Dragons assistant coach Jackson Kornberg echoes Alfie's statements about his ability to impact a game.

"Alfie is a class act," Jackson said during the season.

"He is determined and has a real desire to improve. While he's not ridiculously quick, he has the ability to see the game quicker than most and react to that.

"He's played midfield and forward for us and shown he's capable of having a significant impact in either position."

When looking for inspiration, Jarnestrom models his game off of the AFL's best small forwards.

"I like looking at players such as Michael Walters (from Fremantle) and Eddie Betts

(from Adelaide) who have a big impact up forward by putting on pressure but are also able to go into the midfield an impact there as well."

Since returning to the Dragons line-up in round 12 against Gippsland Power, Jarnestrom has been nominated the Fin-Fitness best-on-ground player twice and slotted seamlessly back into the Dragons way of football.

Despite his strong run of form, Alfie says nothing has changed.

"Personally, not much has changed, I'm just really enjoying my footy at the moment and that has translated into good performances," he said.

"I'm going into every game confident in my ability to perform and execute the game plan."

A member of the 2017 Sandringham Dragons leadership group, Jackson describes Alfie as one of the best "decision makers" he has seen in his time at the Dragons.

"Alfie is a natural leader and is respected immensely by his peers, which is a credit to him and the hard work he puts in on the track and off field.

"I would regard him as one of the best decision makers without the ball that I've coached throughout my time at the Dragons ... he just sees (the run of the game) before anyone else."

With his time at school drawing to a close and his VCE exams nearly upon him, Alfie isn't fazed by the pressures the combination of TAC Cup and year 12 present.

"I completed two $\frac{3}{4}$ (VCE) units by year 12 as I knew it would be a busy year and it has allowed me to use my spares effectively in school and not feel too stressed out (about the busy year)," he said.

"At the moment, I try (to spend my spare time) studying for exams but I love to play golf and hang out with friends."

Kavisha Di Pietro

PLAYER FOCUS

Izzy Huntington



One year ago Izzy Huntington was living out her football dream. She was coming off her third Vic Metro Youth Girls championship and was named best on ground in the National Championships grand final after amassing more than 30 disposals and kicking five goals.

On-track to becoming the face of the Sandringham Dragons in the newly formed TAC Cup girls' league, Huntington tore her ACL playing in the under-18 curtain raiser to what would be the final AFLW exhibition match.

Fast-forward 12 months and having completed her rehabilitation, Izzy is fast becoming a household name. Widely touted as this year's number 1 AFLW draft pick, the St Michael's Grammar School captain is taking it all in her stride.

"I am trying to stay focused on my studies and rehab and just keep that balance nice and intact and not worry too much about all the media because so much can change between now and the draft," she said.

"I think balance is important at this stage [of the year] and not getting too caught up in all of the media and the speculation."

Huntington, who has been playing football since she was five, said choosing to play football was the "natural progression" in her family.

With two older brothers, Fergus and Lachy, both playing for the Sandringham Dragons, Izzy was destined for TAC Cup.

"I went through the Auskick pathway with two older brothers ... I just followed along with them," she said.

"I started playing Auskick and then moved up the ranks through the SMJFL and I am playing with Melbourne University now in the VFL women's league."

No stranger to the unique pathway to AFL football for women, Huntington spent majority of her junior career playing with boys.

"It was a little bit odd," she said upon reflection.

"It was a bit of a rarity for girls to be playing at that stage ... I was the only girl in my team.

"It was a really good experience to be playing with the boys but I am glad that they now have pathways for girls and the leagues established."

Familiar with long-term injury, having broken her leg in the 2015 season, Huntington has utilized her year off from football to develop different aspects of her game.

"It's undoubtedly been tough but I have been able to work on parts of my game through doing rehab that I wouldn't have [otherwise]. It does bring up other opportunities and being in year 12 it all goes pretty quickly and time flies so I am almost back on the track now," she said.

Huntington looks to GWS Giants AFLW player Alicia Eva for inspiration and advice on developing her game.

"She has coached me since I was around 13 and now I am playing and training with her at Melbourne University so to be able to spend time working with her and now training with her has been awesome," Izzy said of her mentor.

"She is such a skillful and knowledgeable player."

Eva reciprocates those feelings for the versatile left-footer, describing her as "pretty exciting" on Fox Footy's AFL360.

"Even with a couple of injury setbacks we know she's an extremely versatile player. She's a left footer with beautiful skills.

"Because she's so versatile she could definitely go Pick 1," Eva said.

Not short on ambition, the 18-year-old has grand plans for her future post-VCE with university and studying medicine firmly in her sights.

"I definitely want to go and study at university next year," she said.

"I want to go down the university pathway and see where that takes me while hopefully balancing AFLW."

Kavisha Di Pietro

PLAYER FOCUS

The Brayshaw Brothers



As Andy Brayshaw ponders his whirlwind 2017 campaign and the upcoming draft night, he can't help but shift the focus away from him and onto his family.

Brayshaw's finish to this year was brilliant, to the point where he has rocketed into top-five draft pick contention.

But as happy as he is with his 2017 season, he speaks more glowingly of his older brothers.

The 17-year-old reflects on his favourite Demons midfielder Angus Brayshaw and his incredible courage to return to the footy field after suffering four concussions in 12 months.

"I was definitely a little bit scared," says Andy — the youngest of four brothers — about bro No. 2.

"But after watching him in his first game back for Melbourne get a big

knock (from Saint Koby Stevens) then get back up and play a really good game, I feel like that's given him heaps of confidence."

Andy watched Melbourne select Angus with Pick 3 in the 2014 draft — "I was so proud of him" — then saw him transition from a first-year player to a mature fourth-year player, all while dealing with several concussion setbacks.

"Angus has always said he's not going to change how he goes into contests. He's always going to crack in hard. He's just been unlucky to have a couple of head-knocks," Andy tells foxfooty.com.au.

"Watching how hard he works and to see everything he's gone through has given me a bit of confidence that I can have a really big dip at AFL level."

Then there's brother No. 3 Hamish,

who has also endured great adversity but from a completely different perspective.

Hamish produced an excellent season then captained the Sandringham Dragons, including a 16-year-old Andy, to the 2016 TAC Cup. That was after returning from a foot injury that sidelined him for two months.

Come the 2016 national and rookie drafts, however, his name wasn't called out by any AFL club.

But instead of getting bitter, Hamish got better. Much better, in fact. He returned to the Dragons as a 19-year-old to average outstanding TAC Cup numbers (1.5 goals, 24.6 disposals and 6.4 tackles from 11 games) then won a spot on the Sandringham Zebras' list where he played 12 VFL games.

All while studying science — majoring in astrophysics — at university.

Hamish's relentless pursuit of an AFL career has inspired Andy, to the point where he'll approach draft night a tad uneasy.

"I think if I were to get picked up, I'd be more worried about watching the rest of the draft and hoping Hame would go more than anything else," Andy says.

"For him to get picked up, it would mean just as much to me as for myself getting picked up.

"I remember talking with Angus about it and we were wondering how we would've gone if what happened to Hame happened to us. I just don't think I'd be able to handle it nearly as well as what he has. The way that he's stayed in touch with family and friends while also working so hard at footy — and it hasn't changed how he is as a bloke.

"It just goes to show how much you've got to want it and I couldn't be prouder of him."

The bond Andy shares with his brothers has been a special one for years.

The Brayshaw boys were like any sport-loving siblings: Rough, tough and competitive.

When it came to the backyard battles, Andy and Angus used to team up against Hamish and Will — the oldest of the quartet.

"I was rag-dolled a bit as a youngster. But I've started giving it to them now," Andy laughs.

"We used to have a couple of trees in the backyard that looked like footy posts. We'd go out the back, have a

kick, tackle each other — that competitiveness of just cracking in, I loved it from a young age.

As expected, the family house insurance copped a decent workout.

"We had a trampoline on to a basketball ring and I remember Will slam-dunked it and the backboard actually smashed," he says.

With Angus' AFL commitments, Hamish's busy uni-footy lifestyle and Will's ties to the Australian Army, full family gatherings aren't as common. Which is what makes them so special now.

"We're a really close group of boys

Now he's one of the best midfielders in this year's draft class, as he can win the ball both inside and outside, make correct decisions with aplomb, push forward to hit the scoreboard and work himself into the ground.

An early-season quad injury, which sidelined him for six weeks, threatened to derail Brayshaw's draft year. But he returned to footy field — at national champs level, too — with no rust, racking up 20 and 22 touches in Vic Metro's final two games.

Brayshaw went on to dominate at school footy level — including a two-goal, 42-disposal performance against Geelong Grammar — as Hailleybury College completed a perfect



and it's awesome when we're all together. We get up to a bit of fun," Andy says.

While Andy has always loved footy and watching his brothers progress, he only began thinking seriously about an AFL career two years ago after making the Vic Metro Under 16s squad for a carnival on the Gold Coast.

10-0 season. He would also captain an APS representative team to victory over an AGSV side, finishing with 31 disposals, 12 contested possessions, eight tackles and six clearances — a fair afternoon's work.

Then came an incredible back end to the TAC Cup season with the Dragons. In all 10 TAC Cup games he played, Brayshaw finished with 20-plus disposals and 100-plus Champi-

on Data ranking points, while he was also ranked No. 1 in the competition for assists.

Oh, and he smashed it at the combine with some exciting results in the running tests. He claimed the highest score in the first ever yo-yo test, reaching level 22.4, before finishing in the top three in the 2km time trial.

“His gut-running is one of his real features and he showed that in the yo-yo test winning that,” Dragons talent manager Ryan O’Connor tells foxfooty.com.au.

“He’s able to push through pain and when it means something push a bit more.

“He accumulates possessions and creates really nicely, but he’s also very team and defensive-focused as well, as seen by his two-way running.”

Brayshaw sees that team-orientated attitude as one of his biggest strengths.

“I’d like to think I’m pretty selfless, give the first option and not try and do too much — just do the simple things

really well,” he says.

“I feel like my skills and how clean I am with the ball would be a strength of mine and I think my speed has improved as I like to break away from stoppages and change direction really quickly.”

O’Connor believes Brayshaw is a “well-rounded” package both on and off the field and “comes across as being professional and passionate about what he does”.

“I think he’s well and truly ready for a chance and I think a lot of clubs can see that too,” O’Connor says.

“He should be really proud of how he’s developed as a midfielder, because he played other roles up until this year at TAC Cup level. The exciting thing is he can probably play in all areas of the ground if he goes to the next level, which is a good thing for clubs. Small back, small forward, midfielder — he can probably tick a number of boxes.”

For Brayshaw, who’s on the verge of achieving a similar feat to the one brother Angus reached three years

ago, 2017 has been a year full of praise and accolades.

But he couldn’t have asked for two better role models to guide him through it all.

“It’s been huge for my development. Watching Angus in his success and Hamish in his persistence, I feel like it’s made me a better person and I feel like it’s put me in good stead for the future,” he says.

Ben Waterworth
Fox Sports



PLAYER FOCUS

Charlie Constable



Charlie Constable is a modern day midfielder in every sense of the word; he's tall, can run all day and has tremendous class and precision with his disposals.

Footyology had a quick chat with the first-round prospect about his player comparisons, who he thinks is the best player from this year's group and much more.

The biggest thing I'd say you've demonstrated this year is that you're a ball magnet. What specific things do you need to do to make that translate in the AFL?

I think I need to get my body physically prepared for the bigger bodies at the next level so I'm able to consistently win the ball on the inside.

What AFL player do you look at now and say: "That's the player I want to be at my absolute best."

Patrick Cripps. He is someone I try and watch closely. I think we play a similar role and I think we can all

see how valuable he is to the Carlton Football Club.

What's one thing you think you're elite at?

I'm a clean player. I pride myself on being one-touch.

Do you have a number in mind in terms of where you want to be drafted? If you slip below that number how will you react?

I'm not focused on a number. I guess it would be nice going in the first round, but just to be drafted would be great so not fussed.

Would you prefer to be drafted by an AFL team that is a good chance to make finals or a team that is near the bottom and might have a bit more opportunity?

Going to a club where you can have lots of opportunities would be great for my development, but in saying that being in a culture where finals are played would be amazing, so I'd adapt to whatever my situation.

What's the one criticism about your game that you personally don't agree with?

A few people have knocked my kicking early in the year. I think I'm a pretty good kick, so I can't say I fully agree with that criticism.

Say you have a bad game and you hear someone at the MCG taunting you, or you get social media trolls berating you on Facebook or Twitter, how would you react to that?

I'd like to think I'm pretty strong mentally and that sort of stuff wouldn't affect me a whole lot, but if it did I wouldn't hesitate to talk to people around the club and get advice.

Conversely, say you have a few seasons like Clayton Oliver just had and everyone in the media starts to say you're worth a million dollars a year etc. How would you react to that?

I think it's really important to control what you can control and that's playing footy so I'd just stick to that and let the outside world say what they like and not get ahead of myself.

What's the best piece of advice you've had this year – and who was it from?

Matty Lloyd told me in pre-season just to back in my ability and focus on the areas that you want to be a point of difference, and that's stuck with me all year.

Do you think you could contribute in an AFL grand final as the player you are today?

It's very hard to say having never played at the level, but what I do know is I'd just go out there and give it a crack and play my role to the best of my ability.

SANDRINGHAM DRAGONS



2017