

CGFC Newsletter #1 of 2009

Hello again to all supporters,

I have just re-read the final newsletter from the previous season. It was written at a time when our stocks were low (apart from the U19 team who were certainties for the finals) and we were hoping for a minor miracle to stave off relegation. Our last few games were very disappointing and we had to return a number of the 19's to their team to ensure their eligibility for finals. This left our senior team even more exposed and we paid the price, relegation to C Section for 2009. The reserves finished down the bottom but the U19's did go on to the Grand Final only to be narrowly defeated by Beaumaris. The combination of a poor pre-season without a training ground until the eve of round 1, early injuries to key players and lack of depth in our senior list made life difficult for everyone but we did "blood" a number of our talented U19 players, some of whom played a lot of games in the senior side.

One of my final comments last season was that if we were to experience relegation for the first time in 11 seasons we would not want to go down with an "ageing list". Well, a combination of two years of good recruits from School and again from the class of 2008 and we certainly don't have an ageing list, quite the contrary. We will be missing some experience but importantly we have retained the senior players who "busted their gut" last season against the odds and who wanted to continue to wear the "Blue and White". We have also recruited a few players who will certainly challenge for a senior place in what will be a terrific young squad.

Most supporters will be well aware of the appointment of Steven Lawrence as Senior Coach for 2009. Steve's experience as a recent AFL player will be known to most but maybe some of not aware that he spent the past two seasons as a key player for Old Scotch. We actually had two excellent candidates for the Senior role and our newly formed Board put a lot of thought into the decision making process. From the moment we introduced Steve to the players at a specially convened meeting, there was a clear acceptance by the players of his frank and open approach and particularly his ability to relate closely to them.

Our School has been outstanding in their support of the subsequent pre-season arrangements. Following Steve's appointment, we also secured the services of an experienced Phys-Ed instructor, Russell Jarrett, whose experience in the fitness industry, coupled with his past work at the elite football level saw pre-season start in November at Caulfield Campus. We immediately experienced an unprecedented high turn out and maintained the excellent numbers up until the Christmas break. Russell's approach to the necessary speed, agility and endurance work was highly specialized and included some testing by professional fitness people, with subsequent follow up in the New Year. Steve's brother Dale, an experienced footballer, recently retired and Steve's father Barry (St Kilda legend) are also part of the coaching committee, Barry Lawrence and Barry Rowlings have teamed to work with the mid-fielders (an area of exposure in 2008). Dale, a successful goal kicker will work with the forwards.

We have reappointed James Lawson to coach our Reserves and following Chris Mathieson's unavailability due to family and business pressures we are indeed fortunate to have the services of former senior player, Ben Gross to coach our U19 squad. I will assist Steve on the administrative side of coaching and take responsibility for the defense portfolio during the season.

The numbers since the Christmas break have improved even further (up to 70 per night) with the return of some players from their overseas trips and we have retained nearly all of the talented U19 squad from 2008. There are also some who are with VFL squads who have signed to have CGFC as their second team.

Just over a week ago 45 players attended a "boot-camp" under the guidance of professionals, on the beach at Brighton on a Saturday morning after the original venue in the Dandenongs became unavailable due to bushfires. It was an amazingly tough 4 hour session where teaming together was paramount. Not one player gave it away as too hard to handle. Only two injuries stopped the full contingent from completing the circuit. It was the most impressive team building session in my time at CGFC. The leadership group also led the pre-bootcamp, goal setting session on the Friday night and the de-brief on Saturday afternoon. The outcome will serve the playing group very well in the coming months. We will be fielding very fit and committed group of players.

Part of our aim after the disappointment of 2008 was to re-build our operations off the field and to this end we have also been very successful. Parents Ian Foote, Allan Sinclair, John Hammond, Ross Wood and Darryl Price committed to provide their expertise at Board level. They were joined by a couple of younger past students, Mark Wizel and Andrew Galak, whose friendship with current players encouraged them to also contribute in their areas of expertise. We will continue to build our team of off-field contributors in the coming months, especially to obtain the all important female viewpoint. It will be a big year socially for us as well.

In the current economic climate the challenge of financing our operations looms larger than ever before. We hope to

receive strong support from our regular, major sponsors but essentially, we must continue to build our basic membership groups and in this regard we seek your ongoing support. The Board's plans to improve conditions at Glenhuntly will test our resources severely but we must continue to provide suitable facilities for players and supporters alike. Our ground is in superb condition, having been completely resurfaced with drought resistance turf and we have drawn up plans for significant improvements upstairs. The shower and toilet facilities are presently being renovated and will be completed by round 1. BY CONTINUING TO SUPPORT OUR MEMBERSHIP DRIVE YOU WILL ENABLE US TO REACH BUDGET.

There will be no easy ride through C Section but our numbers, our fitness and our revival plans will please everybody. We have programmed to play three practice matches against Werribee, Fitzroy and Monash Blues in the coming weeks and details will appear on our website www.cgfc.com.au The website is presently being revamped but will continue to provide updates on all aspects of Club life throughout the season.

Our past playing group, The Fieldsmen, will conduct their annual Golf Day on Friday 20th March at Malvern Valley with dinner to follow. It is not too late to book a spot. It was an excellent event last year and invitations are extended to all supporters as well as past players.

Finally, a number of people have taken the time to call and see the boys training and have been impressed with the numbers, the well organized training sessions and the quality of training at Caulfield Campus and we invite all supporters to call and have a look at the enthusiasm.

Geoff Reilley, on behalf of the CGFC Board