

Manly Bombers 2008 Season Review

Presented by the 2008 Club President, Ashley Parker, to the members of the Manly Bombers Junior Australian Football Club at the 2008 Annual General Meeting (September 14, 2008)

Ladies & Gentlemen, Boys & Girls,

Welcome to the Eighth Manly Bombers Presentation Day & Annual General Meeting.

This year was another record season for the Manly Bombers:

- More Auskickers than ever before (106 compared to last year's record of 86)
- More competition teams than ever before (10 competition teams verses last year's record of 9)
- Total registered players of 301 (compared to last season's record of 248)
- The Manly Bombers is now the fourth largest junior AFL club in Sydney

Once again, Weldon Oval was put to good use. We hosted 76 games throughout the year, and my thanks and congratulations go to all those people who were prepared to act as timekeepers and collect paperwork as ground managers.

I have six highlights for the year (in no particular order):

1. Auskick Gala Day

For the benefit of those of you who weren't there to witness it, on Sunday 22nd June, 300 children and their families came to Weldon Oval in what I would describe as the biggest day in the Club's short history. The 2008 Auskick Gala Day was a logistic triumph - three canteen stations and 33 organised games of Auskick stretching from the Stirgess Reserve netball courts across Weldon to the very end of the Frank Grey hockey fields. The day was caught on camera by film makers recording a documentary on the spread of Australian Football throughout the country. My congratulations to Kelvin Millsom, Sally Hepples and the entire Auskick volunteer field team that made the day such a success.

The quality of the Manly Bombers Auskick program was recognised by the AFL a few weeks ago when our own Kelvin Millsom was named the 2008 Auskick Co-ordinator of the Year.

2. Club Sunday

Conducted on the last Sunday of the Easter school holidays, Club Sunday was an opportunity for teams to hone their skills with practice matches and training drills. It was a rare day where the Club was able to come together as one to celebrate the commencement of the season with a free BBQ and was a chance to build Club unity.

3. The Pittwater-Manly Alliance

Our Under 13 and Under 14 teams this year were made up of players from both the Manly Bombers and the Pittwater Tigers. It was the Manly Bomber's honour to play host to this joint venture. Joint ventures, especially in their infancy, are like a pack of cards and rarely succeed for many reasons – lack of support from the respective Committees, lack of support from respective team management and lack of support from parents among them.

Our recent experience with another club is testimony to their fragility, but this joint venture ticked all the boxes. I would like to acknowledge the leadership of Glenn Elliot and Kurt Sampson at Pittwater and to Haydon Bray, David Fitzgerald and Kevin Morgan for their support and determination from the Manly side to ensure the success of this union. But I reserve my greatest praise to the players themselves – to the Pittwater players who boldly stepped into a brand new environment at Manly and to the Manly players who warmly embraced their new team mates into the Manly fold. I believe that we have set a new benchmark and a model for others to follow in such endeavours. On behalf of the Manly Committee, my hearty congratulations and gratitude go to everyone involved in making this joint venture a success.

4. Success on the Field

The Manly Bombers fielded 10 competition teams this year. There are no finals in the Under 9 and of the remaining 8 sides, 5 teams made it through to the finals.

- Under 10 Black
- Under 11 Red
- Under 12 Division 1
- Under 13
- Under 14

To use an Olympic analogy, we made the final in 5 events and finished with a bronze and two silver medals. Our Club had more teams playing in finals this year than any other year of the Club's history and we congratulate the players and the coaches on the success they enjoyed this year.

5. AFL Scholarships

You may be surprised to know that AFL talent scouts have been active around the Manly Bombers this year. We have hosted scouts from Collingwood, Richmond, Adelaide Crows, St Kilda, Brisbane Lions and Sydney Swans. I am pleased to report that Manly have eight players who have been pre-listed for consideration for AFL Scholarships. In addition, we have six under 13 and under 14 players in the AFL Starz squad: Doug Hadden, Mitch Cullen, Christian Jurlina, Gerard Martin, James Fitzgerald and Mark Brinker.

We congratulate these players on this wonderful personal achievement. With the spotlight on the Manly Bombers as a source of AFL talent, we will be taking a more proactive approach to coaching next year and will be sourcing external coaching expertise to provide guidance to our appointed coaches and to deliver specialised coaching as and when required.

6. Fund Raising Night

On the 25th July, some 140 Bomber families, friends and sponsors gathered at the Harbord Diggers for our annual Music Trivia and Fund Raising Night. It was a night filled with fun, laughter and high spirits. We raised \$5000 for our children and my sincere thanks go to all those who attended.

Sponsors

A Club of our size could not and cannot survive without the generous support of our sponsors. To this end, I would like to thank:

Our Major Sponsor: Harbord Diggers Mounties

Our Team Sponsors:

- U/9 Blacks – Ian Westmore Orthodontics
- U/9 Reds – David Connor Jewellery
- U/10 Blacks – Hadley Green Investments
- U/10 Reds - PureCool Filtration Systems
- U/11 Blacks – Major Training Services
- U/11 Reds – Les Bickley Roofing
- U/12 Division 1 – Hadley Green Investments
- U/12 Division 2 – Bendigo Bank
- U/13 – IPP Consulting

Sponsors are an integral part of our Club. Without them, the Manly Bombers would not be the strong club it is today. Our sponsors pay for equipment, pie nights, trophies and contribute to the ongoing maintenance of the Club. PLEASE support our sponsors and when you do, let them know that you support THEM because THEY support the Manly Bombers.

Coaches

Coaches are the most precious resource we have. Not only do they give their time freely for the benefit of our children, but they also:

1. Negotiate with their employers to leave work early to attend training, and
2. Negotiate with their spouses to sacrifice valuable family time to coach our children.

It requires a lot of courage to take on not only a squad of 15-20 junior footballers, but also sacrifice work and family time as our coaches do. They deserve our utmost respect, support and encouragement. I thank our 2008

coaches for their contribution to the Club and the development of our players this season.

The 2009 Season

Securing fields for training and games will be our main priority in the off season given the resurfacing of Weldon Oval which will be unavailable throughout 2009. The majority of our home games will be played on Frank Grey Reserve, however, training and other match day venues are still being resolved. Thanks again to Glenn Elliot and the Pittwater Tigers Committee for the assistance they have rendered to us in this matter.

As a result of the closure of Weldon Oval, next year will be somewhat unsettling and will require your patience and understanding as we improve our facilities and build an even better future for our children.

Clubroom Redevelopment

The redevelopment of the Clubrooms is scheduled to take place in 2010. Unfortunately, site access restrictions prevent us from redeveloping the Clubrooms at the same time that Weldon Oval is resurfaced. The new Clubrooms will be jointly funded by Warringah Council, the AFL, the Warringah Cricket Club, the Manly Warringah Wolves AFL Club and the Manly Bombers. The three sporting co-tenants have formed a group called Club Weldon to liaise with Council on the DA process, to project manage the build and to raise money to fund the commitment due from the three clubs. Please keep an eye out for opportunities to contribute to fundraising activities such as the soon to be launched "Buy a Brick" campaign.

2009 will be a difficult season given the construction work around the Club, however, the short term pain will be worth the long term gain. Please get behind your Committee, your coaches, your team managers and the children as we build a better Weldon Oval precinct for the future.

On behalf of the 2008 Committee, I would like to thank the parents for their support in 2008. I commend this report to the members of the Manly Bombers Junior Australian Football Club and look forward to serving the Club again in 2009.

Thank you

Ashley Parker
President – Manly Bombers Junior Australian Football Club