



The Annual Report of the Epping Eastwood
Football Club Inc. for Season 2020

Presented to the Annual General Meeting
Held Monday 16th November 2020

Tonight I am pleased to submit the 68th Annual Report of the Epping Eastwood Football Club for your consideration and acceptance.

What a year it was! Perhaps one we'd like to forget. A smoky start to pre-season saw our teams on the park for trial games... and then suddenly it all stopped for Covid lockdown. So we waited two months and finally, thanks to the efforts of our State and local associations, we got back on the park for a sudden start to the season in the first weekend of July.

A tremendous amount of work went on behind the scenes by our North West Sydney Football Association, Football NSW and of course our own management committee to ensure we got to play what was basically a full season (albeit minus semi-finals and a couple of games). Our coaches had to work out how to conduct "non-contact" training sessions for the first month. We also have to acknowledge the work of the Premier League coaching team who managed to keep the squad motivated and fit through the whole "lockdown" period with innovations such as online video workouts.

So a huge thank you to everyone who made this 2020 season happen through once-in-a-lifetime trying circumstances.

Of course, our player numbers took a bit of a hit with people understandably pulling out due to the pandemic and the uncertainty around the start of the season. We were forced to combine a few junior teams, lost one all-age team and didn't see the same last-minute rush into mini teams. In spite of that, we still fielded good numbers across all competitions. I'm sure that next year will see a surge back to football, while the impending Women's World Cup in Australia in 2023 is certainly going to create more interest. We see this as a great opportunity to increase our women's and girls' teams.

Comparison of Team Numbers for 2019 / 2018 / 2017

<i>Teams</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>2019</i>	<i>2018</i>
Minis (U6-U9)	7	14	15
Juniors (U10-U17)	9	8	8
Seniors (U18+, AA, O35, O45)	9	13	14
Premier League (1st, Res)	2	2	2
Total Teams	27	37	39
Total Players	386	479	507

Even with all the challenges of the year, a number of our teams performed excellently in their respective competitions. U13/2 and U15/2 both won their Premierships and the U15s went on to also win their grand final. A great achievement.

All that solo training paid off for Premier League with both first and reserve grade finishing 2nd in their premiership competitions. We were beaten in both grades by West Pennant Hills Cherrybrook, who have built a tremendous squad over the past few years. We met them in both Grand Finals but unfortunately couldn't come up with a win. The first grade final was extremely close and came down to a dramatic penalty shootout.

It is worth mentioning the huge improvement in the reserve grade results this year; it seems the team has finally “clicked”. It’s tremendously satisfying to see so many young players there (as well as in 1st grade) who have come up through our junior ranks. (And may have been coached by a certain Club President along the way). It will be great to see how this strong squad develops and we continue to expect great things from them. Congratulations to head coach Michael Norton, the coaching staff and all the players.

Senior football made a strong showing yet again and we fielded teams in All-Age (4 teams), Over-35 (2 teams), Over-45, Under-18, Under-21 and of course Premier League. It looks like a number of our O45 players are finally retiring from active duty. Some of them started in the Under-6s. This has been our most successful team in our Club’s long history and can trace its origins back to our all-conquering Premier League of the 1990s. They continued their success through Over-35s and into the Over-45s. We would like to thank them for their many years of service to the Club. Hopefully we’ll see some of them passing on those years of football knowledge to our younger players in the coming seasons. (Hint! Hint!)

In the junior competitive age groups we made a very good showing in spite of the hit to player numbers. As mentioned above, U13 and U15 won their premierships. U14/2 did well after being promoted to a higher division this year. U16/1 struggled a bit playing in Division 1 for the first time but it was a good experience for the boys. (I believe we call it “character building”). We have a strong contingent in U10s and U11s as well, so that bodes well for the future.

We again fielded teams in girls’ football, in Under-8 and Under-9. The players are improving dramatically each year and there were some serious skills on display by the end of the season. The coaches are doing a great job and the girls are having loads of fun.

Minis numbers were a little disappointing this year, but our head minis coach, Sam Collins, made sure their training was on target. Thanks to all the parents who stepped up to coach or manage their teams. We hope you come back next year to take it a step further.

Building work has been on the cards for some time, and we are pleased to announce that construction will begin on the new clubhouse early in 2021. The new building will have improved changeroom facilities, more storage space and a much bigger meeting room. Unfortunately the timing means will be without permanent facilities at Boronia Park for most of the season and will have to make do with some temporary provisions. But the long-term benefit will be much appreciated.

Our new Treasurer, Ms Afia Ovais, will present the Financial Report. This is Afia’s first year and she has taken on a very important role at the Club. We were looking at potentially a large loss this year due to the pandemic restrictions and possible loss of all football, however the good news is that we are in a much better position than initially projected, showing only a small loss. Our financial position remains very strong overall.

In further Covid-disappointment, we were unable to host our usual Club Picnic and Annual Dinner events this year. Instead we had to present Mini and Junior team trophies to the separate teams after their last games. As a bit of consolation we also handed out “goody bags” to all the kids with some branded items and obligatory treats. Many thanks to Mr Ian Smith for his work in organising the presentations.

Senior team presentations (i.e. perpetual trophies, etc) will be announced at the AGM.

Player behaviour was under the spotlight across the Association this season and early on there was a higher than usual number of players cited for abuse of referees and violent conduct. This was apparently the case across all sports and was attributed to an increased level of stress from lockdown and associated financial issues. I am pleased to say that Epping Eastwood players were under-represented in this trend and our on-field behaviour was, generally speaking, a credit to the Club.

It certainly was strange to be playing without spectators for much of the season. Premier League games at Boronia Park were oddly quiet. However, I think our enthusiastic supporters made up for it in the Premier League grand finals which had a noisy crowd (albeit restricted in numbers).

This year, we must especially acknowledge the work of our coaches and managers. More than ever this year they confronted the challenge of getting teams out on the park in difficult circumstances. As ever, we support our coaches with development opportunities to improve their coaching skills such as the FFA coach education courses which took place much later than usual this year.

Finally we must thank our dedicated Management Committee for their exceptional efforts in 2020. We have welcomed some new members this year and look forward to their further contribution into the future. Of course, we always welcome new members who want to contribute in some way at the administrative level. Please have a chat to some of the current committee if you’re interested.

So that’s it for a very difficult year at the Tigers. We are very lucky that things turned out so well in spite of the circumstances. Let’s hope the summer break continues to bring good news and we can resume normal service in 2021. See you out on the park again for some great football.

GO YOU TIGERS GO!

Chris Salmon
President