



2021 ANNUAL REPORT

President's Report

Like last year, 2021 has brought its share of challenges to the club as well as each of our members individually. Lockdowns interrupted football activities in February, May/June, and again in July. The lockdown starting in early August ultimately led to the cancellation of the season, resulting in no league premiers, no relegation, and no promotion.

Football has been an important part of our members' lives throughout the pandemic, providing opportunities to socialise and engage in physical activity. Thank you to all the volunteer coaches and committee members who've contributed to the club this year. It's been a challenging year made more difficult by not having the reward of being able to play much football. To everyone who has done anything to keep their clubmates connected and engaged during these trying times, thank you.

Responding to changing COVID-19 restrictions has been a challenging exercise for the volunteers who run MUSC. Each time the Government's directions changed, the club needed to wait for and then digest the advice from DHHS, Sport & Recreation Victoria, Football Victoria, City of Melbourne, and the University of Melbourne. The club's COVIDSafe plan would need updating and approving by council before we could continue activities at Princes Park. Thank you and well done to all coaches, players and supporters for abiding by the various restrictions in place throughout the year and adjusting your activities to make the best of the situation.

COVID-19 has slowed progress on some club initiatives. The time spent on COVID safety protocols has taken focus off other projects. The inability for the Board, committees or groups of coaches to meet in person has all had an impact. Not being able to interact with as many people in person around the club or inside the clubrooms has made it harder for leaders to engage and train volunteers and therefore delegate tasks.

Overall membership numbers have not dropped off from the 2019 season. We had been planning to add a seventh women's team in 2021 but unfortunately ended up withdrawing one team due to a lack of players in pre-season. Hopefully the prospect of a relatively uninterrupted 2022 season, the excitement of an upcoming World Cup on home soil, and the return of students to on-campus learning at the University will see these numbers bounce back and then grow.

While the season was disrupted and ultimately cancelled, there were still lots of positives in 2021. Six or seven of our 19 teams were in serious contention to win their league at the time the season was cancelled. Nic Vincent played her 200th game for the club and life member Harry Gill clocked up the amazing achievement of 700 games for MUSC. Off-field highlights for the year included:

- Constitution amendments being approved by the membership and ratified by Consumer Affairs. This was a significant project of the Board throughout 2020 and provides the foundations for the club to now be able to work towards its vision of being Australia's leading university soccer club.
- Expansion of the Club Administrator role into a position for a properly contracted part-time employee with HR and payroll support provided by Melbourne Uni Sport, and the appointment of Kim Littlejohn to that role.

- Purchase of a Veo Sports Camera, which provides the club's coaches with video analysis capabilities and allows the club to share match highlights online.
- Launch of our new club logo; a project that has been in the works for several years.
- Winning the Club Leadership Award at the UniSport Australia Awards and being a finalist for Community Sporting Organisation of the Year at the Pride in Sport Awards. Well done to the club's Pride Ambassador, Cat Hoang, and everyone who has contributed to initiatives and the culture of the club to make it the inclusive club it is today. The awards are a great recognition of the values and contributions of many good club people over many years.
- Delivering the All Gender Games Series, providing participation opportunities to players who may be excluded during the regular season due to being trans or gender diverse.
- Launch of a new online store through our teamwear supplier This Is Football.
- Introducing a Point Of Sale solution for the Northern Pavilion canteen & bar, allowing the club to better reconcile sales and reduce opportunities for financial mismanagement.
- Progress on some new reconciliation initiatives that will launch in 2022.

Thank you to our 2021 shirt sponsors Robinson Gill Lawyers, TC Real Estate and The Malt Social, and our player of the match award sponsor, New York Minute.

Thank you to Melbourne University Sport for their continued and tremendous support of the club, and also to the City of Melbourne's Recreation Services team.

A massive thank you to my fellow Board members, our dedicated committee chairs, and our club administrators for all their contributions throughout the year.

Victoria's current vaccination uptake and reopening roadmap provide optimism that a more normal season will be possible in 2022. Next year will be the club's 75th anniversary and will also see the club celebrate 40 years of women's football. The club has some exciting initiatives and celebrations planned. I look forward to seeing our members and supporters around the club in 2022.

Michael Owen
President

Melbourne University Soccer Club is based on the land of the Traditional Owners of the Kulin Nations. We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of the land and pay respect to their Elders; past, present and emerging.

Thank you to our key volunteers!

Board of Directors

Michael Owen **President**

Angela Christian-Wilkes **Vice President**

Nez Ozerger **Secretary**

Philip Aitken **Treasurer**

Cat Hoang

Dan Ginger

Lachlan Boughton

Sasha Naidoo

Committee Leaders

Angela Christian-Wilkes **Football Committee Chair**

Cat Hoang **Pride Ambassador**

Ellie Acevedo **Events Officer**

Isabella Mezzetti **Registrations Officer**

Michael Owen **Equipment Officer**

Mitch Ralston **Social Media Officer**

Richard Moore **Matchday Officer**

Sasha Naidoo **Women's Committee Chair**

Tom Mullumby **Partnerships & Grants Chair, History Officer**

Key Contributors

Equipment

Anna Leonedas, Hannah Sawkins, Matt Ross, Michael Owen

Football

Angela Christian-Wilkes, Anna Leonedas, Drew McMullin, Fredrik Hognestad, Lachlan Boughton, Marco Palacio, Melvin Thancanamootoo, Nicola Vincent

Partnerships & Grants

Dan Ginger, Henry Moon, Ili Jakab, Jack Wood, James Cameron, Lottie Wyles, Massimo Santucci, Tom Mullumby

Social Media

Ebony Jax, Jasper Woodcock, Mitch Ralston

Club Administrators

Kim Littlejohn, Stu Dow

Events & All Gender Games Series

Angela Christian-Wilkes, Anna Leonedas, Aras Mollison, Cat Hoang, Dan Ginger, Harry Roberts, Hannah Sawkins, Ili Jakab, Isabella Mezzetti, Jack Wood, Luc Jester, Matt Ross, Oliver Arthur-Andrews, Riley Kirkland, Sasha Naidoo

Matchday

Alejandro Voyest, Hamish Stafford, Oscar Black, Richard Moore, Sean Smith, Simon Leversha, Wilbur Kueter-Luks

Registrations

Isabella Mezzetti, Michael Owen, Simon Leversha

Women's Committee

Angela Christian-Wilkes, Anna Leonedas, Cat Hoang, Eleanor Acevedo, Hannah Sawkins, Ili Jakab, Isabella Mezzetti, Sasha Naidoo

2021 teams

Thank you to all our coaches, assistants & team managers!

Victorian Premier League Seniors
Victorian Premier League Reserves

Shannon Flower replaced David Starr
Karoline Bernacki, Fred Hognestad

Women's State League 2 East

Adam Howard, Nic Vincent

Women's State League 3 East

Tom Bell

Women's State League 4 East

Jill Klein, Andrew John

Men's State League 4 West Seniors
Men's State League 4 West Reserves
Metro 1 Rangers

Marco Palacio
John Laloussis
Theo Paraskevas

Men's State League 5 North Seniors
Men's State League 5 North Reserves
Metro 1 Blues

Mat Kelly
Petros Kapoulitsas
Lachlan Boughton

Metro 4 North-West

Dan Tan, Jordon English

VicSoccer Premier League
VicSoccer Div 1 Blues

Kevin Ly, Michael Hardwick
& Patrick Kamphuis

VicSoccer Div 1 Rangers

Tom Proctor

VicSoccer Div 2 Bohemians

Robin Quinn

VicSoccer Div 2 Blues
VicSoccer Div 2 Rangers

Adeodatus McCormack, Gulsher Singh
Tom Mullumby, Carlo Di Gregorio

Masters Over 45s

Ian Petersen

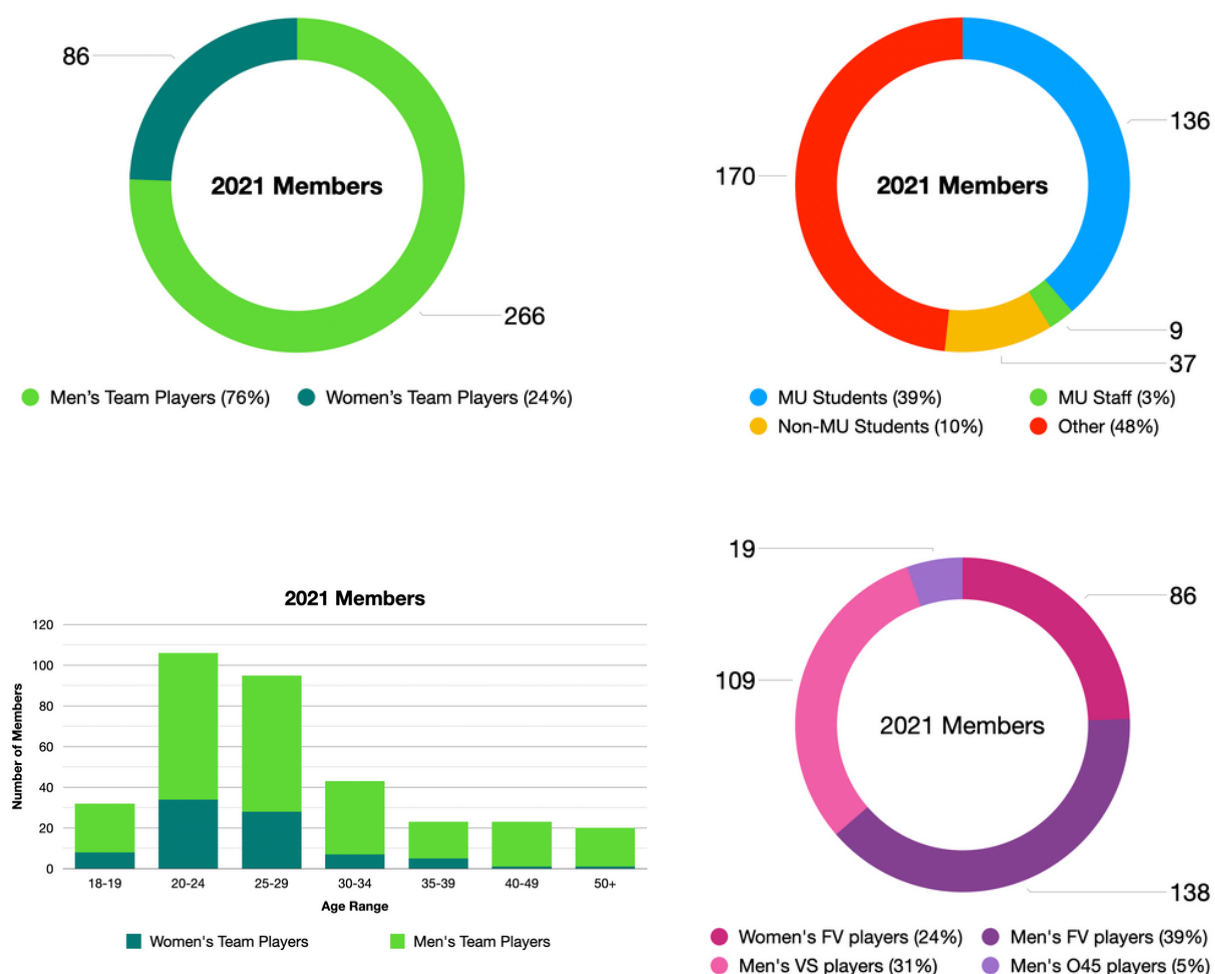
Thank you to [Raffe Brennan](#) for running GK training sessions

Membership Statistics

In 2021, the Club had a total of 370 members:

- 352 playing members (includes player-coaches)
- 8 non-playing members (volunteer coaches & committee members)
- 10 life members (who were not also registered as players)

The following graphs relate to data about playing members only.



The proportion of members playing in women's teams is down from 34% in 2019. The proportion of members who are current University of Melbourne students is down slightly from 42% in 2019.

An additional 397 expressions of interest were received by the Club throughout the year. Of those EOIs, 140 (35%) were from women (79 UoM students) and 257 (65%) were from men (126 UoM students). Most do not go on to trial or train with the Club.

Gender Equity & Equality

Football is a traditionally male-dominated sport. An initial gender audit of a few key areas of the club is summarised below. It establishes baseline data from which the Board will be able to assess progress made in relation to gender equity and equality at the Club, and identify areas of improvement.

Board & Committee Composition

At the 2020 AGM, members approved changes to the Constitution to increase the number of Directors from seven to eight and allow for a gender-balanced Board. For the first time, the Club currently has a full Board with 50:50 representation of players from its men's teams and women's teams.

The Board's four executive roles are split evenly amongst men and women. There is an even split between men's and women's team players in the club's key leadership positions (officers or committee chairs). The Board will ensure more adequate representation of women's team players on the Matchday Committee in 2022.

Facilities

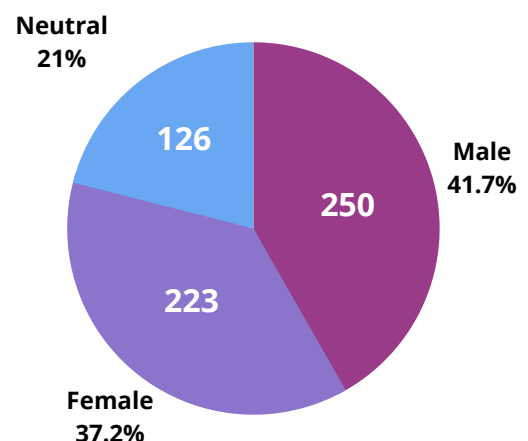
In 2021, 24% of the Club's players were in women's teams. This section of the playing group was apportioned 37% of the Club's overall Princes Park allocation for training.

Each women's team player had access to 2 training sessions per week. On average, each men's team player had access to 1.2 training sessions per week. All 19 of the Club's teams played their home matches at Princes Park.

More club resources are spent on ground hire for the Men's State League teams in pre-season. These squads commence pre-season earlier than other teams at the Club because their competitions typically start a month earlier than all others.

Social Media

Analysis of the Club's Facebook posts for the past three years (2019-2021) shows the Club's posts just slightly favour content solely relating to men or men's teams over content solely relating to women or women's teams. This fairly even split has been achieved without the Club having a formal policy stipulating gender equity in our posts. This is a reflection of the good work done by our social media team over the years and the culture we have at the Club.



Club VP Angela "Carrot" Christian-Wilkes this year completed the Change Makers Project run by Victoria Uni and Football Victoria. Thank you to Carrot's Change Maker mentor, Alana, who performed the social media data analysis.

Finances

In adopting a more club-wide approach to managing finances, it is important to ensure adequate spending on the Club's women's football programs in relation to membership fees collected from women's teams members. Below is a high level overview of spending per player by gender on core football expenses.

Area	Spend per women's team player	Spend per men's team player
Team Entry	\$35	\$49
Player Registration	\$193	\$154
Referees	\$69	\$50
Coaching	\$113	\$35
Pre-season Facilities	\$13	\$33
	\$423	\$321

Spending on in-season facilities, training equipment, matchday equipment, playing gear and other club-wide operating costs are generally the same for all club members regardless of gender.

Average membership fee paid to the Club

Women's team player: \$388

Men's team player: \$394

New Club Crest

Melbourne University Sport have approved a new club crest which will be used on MUSC merchandise and new playing kits going forward.



MUSC merchandise can be purchased from the club's online store:

<https://www.thisisfootball.com.au/musc-club-hub>

Veo Sports Camera

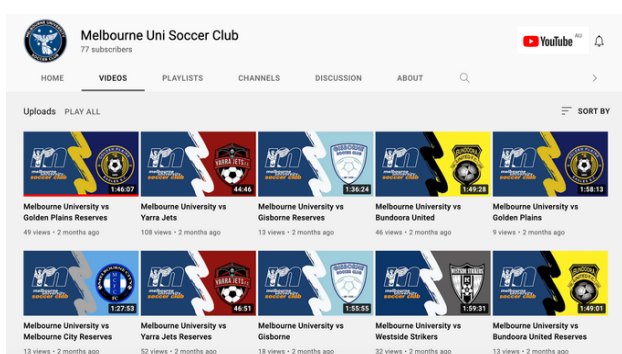


Thank you to Melbourne Uni Sport for co-funding MUSC's entry into the world of video analysis!

Veo allows the club to record and analyse football matches without the need for a camera operator. The camera is set up on a 4m tripod at the half way line. It films with two 4k lenses and records 180 degrees, capturing every single moment of a match.

When a recording is uploaded to the Veo platform, software creates a video that automatically zooms and pans to follow the action on the pitch. Goals are automatically detected and tagged, making it simple to produce highlights for sharing on the club's social media channels.

Coaches can zoom and pan freely to see all players at all times to analyse the match in detail. They can create and annotate highlights, and share those to provide feedback and instructions to the entire team or individual players.



Social Media snapshot

Instagram Reach

2,912 ↑ 44.4%

Reach is the number of unique accounts that saw any of the club's posts or stories at least once.

Facebook Page Reach

43,408 ↑ 23.5%

Reach is the number of unique people who saw any content from the club's Facebook page.

1,058 Insta followers

@melbunisc

396 new FB followers

Oct 2020 Oct 2021
2,985 3,381 ↑ 13.3%

eNewsletter



Subscribe to our new eNewsletter, the **Melbourne Uni Soccer Mailbag**

musc.com.au

Top 5 visited pages

Page	Page Views
/	6,573
/join-musc/	1,819
/about/teams/	1,488
/for-players/player-handbook/	738
/musc-merchandise/	564



Join MUSC's running group on Strava
<https://www.strava.com/clubs/musc>



Congratulations to MUSC alumni **Matty Mifsud** who in September captained Mindil Aces FC to victory in the Grand Final of the NorZone Premier League, the top tier of competition in Darwin.

New Life Member

Madeleine Horey

Congratulations to Madeleine Horey, who was awarded Melbourne University Soccer Club life membership in December 2020.

This membership recognises Madeleine's outstanding contribution to the club over 16 years. During that time, Madeleine served on the Board, was a committee member, played and coached for the club.

Madeleine contributed to a culture that has lived on since she has stopped playing – fostering a community spirit and ensuring that every player in any team deserved to play soccer in an enjoyable environment.

Madeleine also had an exceptional playing career – with over 200 games and numerous club and varsity awards. As a goalkeeper and striker, Madeleine competed in the former Women's Premier League, many State League 1 teams and won many championships with seniors and reserves.

Thank you for your enormous contribution, Mads!



Vale David Lea

Life Member David John Lea passed away peacefully in January 2021, aged 85.



David was born in England and arrived in Melbourne in 1948. He attended Melbourne High School and went on to attain numerous qualifications from the University of Melbourne: a Bachelor of Arts (1957), a DipEd (1958), a Bachelor of Education (1966) and a Master of Education (1990).

David played for the Club from 1953 to 1959, serving as Club Captain from 1956. David played his 100th game for the Club in 1958, becoming one of the first players ever to reach that milestone. David represented the University in Intervarsity competitions in the 1950s and received Half Blues in 1954 and 1955 and a Full Blue in 1957 for soccer. In 1957, David was selected in the Australian Universities Soccer Team. David's playing days came to an end when he suffered a horrific broken leg.

David was Club Secretary and Victorian Amateur Soccer Football Association Club delegate for several years in the 1950s, overseeing the formation of the club's second reserve team. David was heavily involved with student recruitment from other clubs, a process that would often involve lengthy negotiations to obtain clearance.

Away from football, David had a career as an educator. He taught in technical schools and went on to be Vice Principal and Principal at technical schools and TAFE colleges. After teaching, David turned his attention to politics and served as the member for Sandringham in the Parliament of Victoria from 1985 until he retired in 1992. In the 2000s, David made numerous trips to China as an English teacher. David was a poet of some quality, with two published volumes of poetry.

David was an unwavering supporter of the Club for 68 years and kept a strong connection to the University. David would always be one of the first to RSVP his attendance at the annual Blues Awards Dinner and thoroughly enjoyed attending Club functions to hear about the on-field exploits of the latest cohort of MUSC players. David was a popular guest, speaker and award presenter at Club functions, with younger members finding David's memories of his playing days at the Club thoroughly engaging. In recent years, David made a significant contribution to MUSC by detailing the early history of the Club. Without David providing this history, it would never have been known.

For his contributions as a player, committee member, historian, and supporter, David was awarded Life Membership of Melbourne University Soccer Club in 2020. COVID-19 restrictions meant the Club was unable to celebrate this achievement with David before he passed away, but David's family shared that soccer was one of David's many great loves and for him to be bestowed the honour of a life membership made him so happy.



3-1 win over Adelaide in 1957.



David Lea (back row, 3rd from right) was in Intersvarsity winner with Melbourne University in 1953.



David speaking at the MUSC 70th anniversary function in 2017, sporting his Australian Universities Soccer Team tie from 1957.

Thank you to our 2021 shirt sponsors

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Milestone Matches

A very big congratulations to **Nic Vincent** on an incredible **200 games** for the club!



Nic has barely missed a game or training since joining the club in 2009.

Known for her unrivalled preparation and dedication, Nic's passing accuracy and pinpoint corners are the hallmarks of her game.

Perhaps greater than her playing career however, has been her overall contribution to the club. From Board member, to women's Vice President, various committee roles, captaining and later coaching, she's been a great leader and champion of women's sport in general.

150 games Keryn Walters

Once dubbed 'The Talented Walters' by an adoring commentator, Keryn has been a true star of the club for many years now.

Teammates reports that Keryn is a dream to play with and the only question now is just how many goals she will score before she hits her 250th game!



100 games

Lauren Thompson, Isabella Mezzetti, Emer Reynolds & Hannah Sawkins



50 games

Katia Jomini, Eden Litterell, Jess Brotchie, Devon Jones, Alice Poulton, Carla D'alessandro, Lottie Wyles, Ili Jakab & Caitlin Gray



700 games for Harry Gill

Congratulations to life member Harry Gill, who on 15 May 2021 played his 700th match for MUSC.

Harry's MUSC Bohemians triumphed with a 3-1 win in a VicSoccer Division 2 derby against the MUSC Blues. The match started with a ceremonial kick off between Harry and former Brazilian international Mineiro, and was followed by speeches and presentations in the Northern Pavilion.



Donations

Thank you to our generous Foundation Chapter donors:

- Andrew Bullen
- Michael Owen
- Statios Konstantopoulos
- Tom Mullumby

Thank you to Jill Klein for generously sponsoring two Women's Goalkeeper Bursaries.

75th Anniversary

2022 will be the club's 75th anniversary and will also see the club celebrate 40 years of entering teams in women's competitions. Stay tuned for announcements about special anniversary events, playing kits and merchandise.

If you would like to contribute stories, photos or memorabilia from your time at the club to help MUSC celebrate it's 75th, please email history@musc.com.au

Melbourne University Soccer Club

LIFE MEMBERS

Andrew Kotsos
Carlos Navarro Snr
Harry Gill
John Buckley
Maria Berry
Shoni Maguire
Statios Konstantopoulos

Boris Ivanov
Ian Petersen
Madeleine Horey
Michael Metcalfe
Simone Gristwood
Teresa Pong
David Lea (*dec.*)

Life membership nominations can be submitted at any stage of the year. A panel will convene annually to consider nominations received over the previous 12 months. The nomination form is available on the Policies section of the MUSC website.

College Soccer



Photo: By The White Line

Ormond College defeated **Trinity College** 4-0 in the Grand Final in front of 320 spectators at Princes Park.

Queen's College defeated **Kendall Hall** on penalties after a 2-2 draw in the playoff for 3rd.



St Hilda's College defeated **Queen's College** 4-3 on penalties after a 1-1 draw in the Grand Final.

Ormond College defeated **Trinity College** 3-0 in the playoff for 3rd.

Varsity Challenge **The Big Blue**

Monash University v The University of Melbourne

Monash Clayton campus, 31 March 2021

Women's

Melb Uni 2-2 Monash Uni

Melbourne Uni won on penalties.



Lydia Alford (B-DES)
Artemus Arthur-Andrews (B-ARTS)
Daisy Collett (B-ARTS)
Eliane Fader (B-BIOMED)
Chloe Romero (B-SCI)
Georgia Schaddee Van Dooren (B-ARTS)
Esther Suckling (B-ARTS)
Yusra Tawfic (B-BIOMED)
Rebecca Ye (B-SCI)
Maria Callista (B-COM)
Chelsea Kagan (B-BIOMED)
Victoria Wright (B-COM)
Coach: **David Starr**

Men's

Melb Uni 0-2 Monash Uni



Mcauley Blair (B-DES)
Joe Bonic (B-ARTS)
Nathan Gee (B-DES)
Finnian Huzzey (D-PHYSIO)
Lucas Jester (D-MED)
Wilbur Kueter-Luks (M-ECO)
Danyal Masood (M-IB)
Toby Masters (B-SCI)
Ricky Murase (B-COM)
Graeme Stewart (M-URPL)
Jack Wood (M-ENG)
Jack Beardsley (B-SCI)
Stefan Cardamone (M-TEACH)
Ben Norman (B-SC)
Lluan Smith (B-COM)
Coach: **Marco Palacio**

2021 MUSC players and coaches are **highlighted**

Uni Nationals, scheduled for the Gold Coast, were unfortunately cancelled due to the pandemic.

Thank you



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

to all the staff at Melbourne Uni Sport



to the City of Melbourne, especially
Dale, Cindy and Sam in the Recreation Services team



to all the staff, particularly Scott, at This Is Football



to all the staff and organisers at Football Victoria,
VicSoccer and Melbourne Over 45 Soccer



to Moreland City Council,
particularly Holly in the Recreation Services team

Coach's Reports & Award Winners

Victorian Premier League Seniors

Report by Shannon Flower

This season was definitely our hardest season to date: a new league, a new caliber of competition, threat of lockdown wherever we turned and a new coach to get used to. I think this season was a tale of two halves. The first half, we put in the effort, but didn't have the right equation and lost the belief in ourselves to compete with the other teams. The second half of the season we went undefeated! A new found belief and a love for the game again saw us crush it against Eltham and Melbourne Knights. Too bad we couldn't finish the season, as I know we would have added many more W's. 7th place baby!

Best & Fairest (Ford Fenwick Cup)

Lauren Thompson

Runner-up B&F

Jess Brotchie & Nida Mollison

Top Goalscorer

Keryn Walters

Coach's Award

Yusra Tawfic

Captain's Award

Jacqui Brotchie

Players' Player Award

Lauren Thompson

Victorian Premier League Reserves

Report by Shannon Flower & Karoline Bernacki

Two words ... Total. Domination. The Reserves absolutely crushed it this season and went undefeated! CHAMPIONS! Only allowing -- goals and scoring -- goals. Not only did they show the other teams in the league who was the boss, but they also did so with a great attitude of determination and positivity. True leaders of the league or simply put QUEENS of the league! In true royal spirit, they also rallied around the seniors when they were struggling and supported them no matter what. Huge congratulations for a perfect season!

Best & Fairest

Stephanie Cope

Runner-up B&F

Emer Reynolds & Chelsie Kagan

Top Goalscorer

Artie Arthur-Andrews & Georgia van Dooren

Coach's Award

Amelia de Smet

Captain's Award

Nicolette Ciccirelli

Players' Player Award

Lottie Wyles

Women's State League 2

Report by Adam Howard

So I'm sure, like everyone else, we were so disappointed to have the season cut short in the manner in which it did.

Our season had an immense amount of highlights. We had a season of pure positivity. From the outset we all knew we were part of a special group of people and that showed with a resounding first round victory and the manner in which we did it.

We went from strength to strength and carried on our winning streak until round 6 with a hard fought draw against Berwick who were "lucky" (their word not mine) to be playing that at that time. They weren't so lucky the next time we played them as we beat them 1-0 later in the season.

We only lost two games in the season but always responded so well to those results by working so hard on training and our performances showing that work.

Every single player gave all they could and improved as the season went on!

Who knows what more we could have achieved as a group but what I do know is no matter what we would have continued to work hard for each other, left everything out on the pitch and had a great time doing it!!

Bring on next season !

Best & Fairest
Ja Hue Lim

Runner-up B&F
Anushka Desai

Top Goalscorer
Kathryn Ramsay

Coach's Award
Elysia Patsakos

Captain's Award
Devon Jones

Players' Player Award
Alice Poulton

Maria Berry Trophy

PLAYERS' PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Angela Christian-Wilkes

Congratulations, Carrot!

Women's State League 3

Report by Tom Bell

How do you fit a season's worth of chaos into half a coronavirus interrupted season?

First, for maximum drama, concede 16 goals in the first two games before getting an unfortunate injury to one of your defenders during the following week (hope the rehab is going well KP!).

Next, have your new look defence keep a clean sheet, then concede just one over the next fortnight. Helpful here if one of your defenders, Anna L, let's call her, can channel the holy spirit for a Greek Easter clean sheet.

For round 5, spend an hour on the Eastern freeway with 7 of your regular squad, and a host of willing volunteers from all corners of the club, to play at 8:30pm on a Friday Night. Beat Mooroolbark 3-1 after their coach starts picking fights with your players and the rest of their team loses their minds at being upstaged by a team that, much like captain Caitlin in front of their accusing coach, refused to back down.

Don't mention week 6.

Go into lockdown 4. Now it's time for the redemption arc. Come into a return game against the side that beat you 8-2 in the opening game, draw 1-1 with them after another Anna (having more than one Anna helps) scores against them again. Try not to have your new player deplete the first aid kit with their heroic defending but they'll be okay so it's fine.

Next, take on the unbeaten top side who beat you 8-0 at home, have the entire team "understand the assignment (Sheidegger, 2021)" and come within an inch of a draw after Ali scores to make it 2-1 late on.

Unleash this new form on an unsuspecting Brunswick side. If possible, find an Irish forward with a single-minded determination to score 20 goals in a single game, substitute her after she's scored 5 (It's okay, she scores for the resses later that day).

That was too easy though so it's important to add some drama. For example, if you get into a tight tussle with Swinburne and can have one of your wingbacks (Georgia for instance) bound forward and score from 20 yards in the 87th minute, you should do that.

For your last game, encapsulate your whole season in one game. Have one of your star players deputise in goal, go 2-0 down in the first half. Grab one more before half time, another in the second half, and have the game end just a few minutes too early.

Finally, fill your team with committed footballers, the best goalkeeper in the league, strong spirits, and good humours. Ones who can work hard, are incredibly coachable, and are able to find those moments of collective joy that we play football for.

Best & Fairest
Andrea Granados

Runner-up B&F
Zsuzsa Gaynor-Mihaly

Top Goalscorer
Lynn Callanan

Coach's Award
Georgia Manthey

Captain's Award
Ebony Jax

Players' Player Award
Anna Leonedas

Women's State League 4

Report by Andrew John & Jill Klein

Three weeks in, State 4's statistics were as follows: W 0; D 0; L 3; GF 0; GA 34. It is fair to say that this was not the most encouraging start to a season. So, we set as our goal to improve more than everyone else. At the point the season was cancelled, we had played four teams twice; against all four we achieved a better result in the second game than the first. And that improvement came about despite the team losing its main goalkeeper to injury. So we are calling 2021 a successful season!

A few particular highlights: the mudbath in Lilydale, scoring against Banyule City (who only conceded four all season) the one game that we did win (a pity we didn't get to play them twice), Kiran's amazing performances as a novice goalkeeper, Jill's yellow card for removing her shirt, and that goal by Sawks.

Best & Fairest
Hannah Sawkins

Runner-up B&F
Susie Xu

Top Goalscorer
Stephanie Szkilnik

Coach's Award
Bilan Ismail

Captain's Award
Genevieve Clarke

Players' Player Award
Isabella Mezzetti

Masters Over 45s

Report by Ian Petersen

After the disaster that was the non-2020 season, it was a keen group of players who looked forward to getting back onto the grass for the 2021 season. Weekly small-sided practice games prior to the start of the season had everyone fired up for a great season.

The squad for 2021 was little changed from 2019. It comprised:

Player-coach: Ian Petersen

Players: Adrian Bates, Conor Kelly, Dan Barron, Davide Codini, Gareth Gaffney, Jim Fitzpatrick, Joe Barca, John Ormandy, Matt Evans, Mike Mattocks, Nino Pagano, Paddy Lynch, Petros Kapoulitsas, Rocco Carinci, Shamullah Sawiz, Simon Colvey, Tim Smurthwaite, Netra Rai, Paul Casey and Ben Harbinson.

The team managed to get 11 games played before the season depressingly fizzled out. There was only one win in the games played but this was not truly reflective of how the team played. A more favourable fixture for the second half of the season would have likely seen the team win many more games than in the first half of the season, but that was not to be.

The most valuable player award for the team is determined by the votes given by the match referee at the end of each game. For the 2021 season the **MVP award** goes to **John Ormandy** with 6 votes. **Runner-up MVP** was **Adrian Bates** with 4 votes. Other players to be awarded votes by the referees were Paddy Lynch and Shamsullah Sawiz (3 votes each), Simon Colvey and Nino Pagano (2 votes each) and Conor Kelly and Mike Mattocks (1 vote each).

As this 2021 season review is being written the Over 45s squad is currently looking forward to getting back onto the grass for more practice games over the off-season, leading into a hopefully uninterrupted 2022 season.

Finally, I would like to thank all of the MUSC committee members, lead by Michael Owen supported by Angela Christian-Wilkes, Nez Özergen, and Philip Aitken, for the work they have put in over this past (very difficult) year. It is the work put in behind the scenes that makes Melbourne Uni Soccer Club the great club that it is.

Men's State League 4

Report by Marco Palacio

Following a fantastic summer football period, the 2021 MSL4 program kicked off in our favourite hidden pocket of Royal Park in January. The boys were so happy to finally be back on the pitch after rough pandemic times. Hard work was the common denominator in these hot evening sessions with only one thing in mind, competitive football.

Talented players like Carlin Feely, Mo Habib, Tom Scudamore, Matt Donnan and Alex Gounis would not be continuing in our 2021 season, however, MUSC scouts hit the jackpot with the early inclusions to our program talented players like Massimo Santucci, Finn Huzzey, Tom Kay, Oliver Muh and the return of Graeme Stewart from a short stint at The University of California.

Our first win of pre-season couldn't come faster, we visited La Trobe Uni's amazing football facilities where both our seniors and reserves squads had very solid wins; unfortunately, these were followed by our first pandemic lockdown which saw us go into home training mode. Online fitness sessions, Strava runs, Yoga and a challenging Bronco fitness tests kept us busy during difficult times in isolation.

Preseason preparations continued, and by mid-February, the time for some FFA Cup fun had come. In RD1 we drew Balmoral FC, who had finished 2nd in their league the season before, and dominated them from whistle to whistle with a 4-0 win. Our FFA Cup run was cut too short with a disappointing loss to Brunswick Zebras; definitely our most frustrating loss of the season.

A strong preseason preparation saw us catching a bus driven by one of our beloved program leaders Kerry Robinson to Meredith, where our reserves team scored 8 goals to comfortably snatch their first win and our seniors grabbed a late winner to get our first 6 points away of the season.

After an undeserved draw and a solid win at Gisborne, our teams were ready to host one of the promotion favourites, West Strikers Caroline Springs FC who heavily invested in bringing experienced players to their squad, their franchise player, ex-Melbourne City Manny Muscat was one to watch in our first Friday night football double-decker of the season. A big crowd showed up at Princes Park, everything was set to what looked to be a serious contest. And boy oh boy Melbourne Uni made us proud, the team looked solid, fearless and did not give an inch; we saw two of our best players come out with serious injuries early on the game but our spirits were strong, adversity only made us stronger and we came out with a win with a very last-minute goal from James Xu. Tom Kay had a fantastic night and Harvey Orel demonstrated his versatility playing a perfect game as an emergency right back.

A few rounds passed and finally, the time had come. Our much-anticipated visit to Surf Coast FC was around the corner, this is our favourite match of the year as the whole squad is invited and gets to stay overnight in beautiful Torquay, again a draw and a win ignited a night to remember. We hit the local hospitality venues and then came back to our accommodation for some team building activities (what a night!!).

In what was the event of the year, our squad came together to witness the incredible milestone one of our club legends was going to reach; Harry Gil was about to play his 700th game for the club. This was a real eye-opener for many members of our squad and we were glad to be part of the celebrations.

By this time, RD10 was already upon us, Spring Hills FC paid us a visit in Princes Park, we won comfortably both games but were hit by numerous injuries at this point of the season, key players out and heavy rotations were having a huge impact on our weekend results, we were far from our top

performers and more lockdowns coming did not help at all. Back in Online mode challenges, start-stop did take a toll and we struggled to keep a starting 11 week-on week-off.

We lost games against teams we had never lost before and our bad run of games ended up with a one to forget, a visit to West Side Strikers FC ground, and, for the first time since the start of our current program 4 years ago, both teams Reserves (first and only loss of the season) and Seniors team lost and badly, the opposition took full advantage of our misfortunes and taught us a rough lesson.

Our last game of the season was a win against Melton Phoenix, which saw their club sacking the coach after the game thanks to CB Lucas Jester taking advantage of the top cat not being on the bench and making a cameo appearance (master tactical move from coaching assistants John Laloussis and Theo Paraskevas) as a striker scoring some classy goals. This was unfortunately the last game in our season, a final lockdown caused by the appearance of the Delta variant saw our season coming to a very early end. The season was then called null and void by FV, however, this wonderful experience will always remain alive in our hearts, our football program was key to the wellbeing and mental health of most of its members.

During these hard times, the squad stuck together, we faced many challenges both personally and as a team, players like Massimo Santucci, Mitch Ralston, Dan Ginger, Richard Moore and Aakarsh Sharma suffered serious injuries during the season. Our squad was impacted by other minor injuries too which opened the door for new players like Michael Valenta, Callum Wilson, Toby Masters, and Nathan Scott who took on their chances and had a positive impact on the pitch.

Other outstanding players were Riley Kirkland who claimed the golden boot in his first year as a senior player after scoring 32 in his last one as a reserve, Harvey Orel who confirmed himself as a senior player, Kerry Robinson continuing to demonstrate what a leader does on and off the pitch, our vice-captain Luc Jester leadership and our best and fairest of the season Finn Huzzey.

Our volunteer participation continued to increase with more members leading initiatives and taking some leadership roles like Dan Ginger, our club captain became a member of the board at the club. Other members participated in different initiatives to support our club and community which is great as our program has a strong focus in the social versatility of our players. It was unfortunate that we did not have the opportunity to do more together due to the pandemic.

This void and null season thought us some serious lessons, it made our bond as a squad and club stronger and it left us memories that will last forever. I am thankful to everyone who was involved in one way or the other, John, Theo and Matt were key in supporting and developing our program, our leadership group and players should be proud of what they have achieved and a massive thanks to our board members and Mr President Michael Owen who made all this possible.

MSL4 Seniors

MVP

Finn Huzzey

Runner-up MVP

Tom Kay

Top Goalscorer

Riley Kirkland

6 goals in 10 games

Coach's Award

Massimo Santucci

MSL4 Reserves

MVPs

Carlo Di Gregorio, Jack Juric & Nathan Scott

Top Goalscorer

James Xu

10 goals in 7 games

Coach's Award

Sean Smith

Men's State League 5 Seniors

Report by Mat Kelly

After a cancelled 2020, everyone was raring to go for season 2021 – we recruited heavily again, brought in Petros to lead the reserves, sanitised, kept our distance, checked-in and then finally got around to playing some football.

We first headed to a familiar rival in Glenroy Lions who were in red hot form on a strong FFA Cup run. Handing debuts to 5 new recruits, we took the lead inside 7 minutes through Gabs at a corner and worked hard defensively as our opponents piled on the pressure. Unfortunately we conceded from a corner just before half time and then were the victims of a goal that somehow hit both posts before trickling over the line. While we felt we had enough bad luck in one game, it unfortunately continued with a few narrow losses before a hard fought 1-0 win against Keon Park in Round 6 got us on the board.

We were nothing though, if not entertaining. Our 2 (and a half...) games against Yarra Jets a particular highlight -- our first encounter featured a goal of the season contender from Joe while 2 other new boys in Tyler and Jimmy scored their first goals for the club before we somehow let a 3-2 lead slip in the final 10 minutes. The reverse fixture saw us a goal up through Nathan's towering header before a horror tackle led to a broken leg for Gab (who is already back training!) and an abandoned game. Meeting up again a week later, 2 penalties from captain Marcus and a goal from MVP Sean had us 3-0 up after 40 minutes before an aerial assault from the Jets won them a penalty and a couple of chaotic scrambles from set pieces that resulted in goals to finish 3-3.

A series of unfortunate events seemed to befall us with inexplicable regularity – we conceded with the last kick of the game against Meadow Park to draw 3-3 (Allan getting KO'd in the process), Bundoora controversially took a quick free-kick to equalise after Wilbur's wonder goal, the referee found a way to deny 3 stonewall penalties in the same game, the ball somehow found its way over the line after hitting both posts against Glenroy and a glut of injuries saw us finish with 9 men against Tullamarine.

Despite this, I couldn't be prouder of the way the squad reacted to our narrow defeats and bad luck. While many teams would tear themselves apart after losing 4 straight (we've all played in one), I never heard anything but positivity in the change rooms after a game and never saw anything except a desire to get back on the training pitch and improve. The togetherness shown is the type of culture I hoped we could cultivate and is a credit to each and every player.

While the season may not have been a success in terms of pure results, I'm proud of what we were able to achieve by exposing players to State League football and hopefully standing them in good stead for their futures at the club. Across seniors and reserves we were able to give 39 players State League football, with 19 of them new to the club. A total of 26 players made senior appearances throughout the season, 14 of them making their senior debuts.

Big thanks to Petros for leading the reserves and always being there to bounce ideas off, Mickey for always being there for whatever was needed, Mel for assisting throughout the season, Tom for his support in organising preseason, Lachey for lacing up the boots a couple of times and our leadership group Marcus, George, Wilbur, Allan, Ed, Aras and Duncan for setting the standard all season. Finally, thanks to all the players for your application and positivity in a challenging season – I wish we'd won a few more games but nonetheless you were a pleasure to coach and I enjoyed every game day and every session we had together!

MVP
Sean Miranda

Runner-up MVP
Wilbur Kueter-Luks

Top Goalscorer
Sean Miranda
5 goals in 8 games

Coach's Award
Wilbur Kueter-Luks

Men's State League 5 Reserves

Report by Petros Kapoulitsas

The MSL5 Reserves had a solid 2021 season. Had the season not been cancelled, the team would have been in a very good position to defend its 2019 Championship title given its position (second on the ladder with a game in hand), performances, and a schedule that involved playing the bottom 6 sides for the remainder of the season.

Following a 2-2 draw in the opening round and a 2-1 loss in round 2, the team went on to enjoy an undefeated run of 9 matches, dropping only 2 points along the way. The team's ability to resume the season's various disruptions with victories is a testament to the quality, discipline and commitment of the squad.

The team was built on a core of experienced players including Christian Bianchi, Joseph Cummins, George Karantzas, Melvin Thancanamooto and Michael Owen. The core team was enhanced with experience from Senior squad players who were given every opportunity to regain match fitness and confidence as required. Squad stability was pretty consistent; twelve of the 33 players used played 6 or more matches, while a core of 5 players played 10 or 11 matches.

The 4-2-3-1 formation was adopted consistently this season and an attacking flair was encouraged. A tally of 40 goals (3rd best attack in the league) was amassed by 14 different players. Five goals were scored by defenders and central/defensive midfielders, 9 goals were scored by 'dedicated' forwards, and the remaining 26 goals were scored by attacking midfielders. At this level, speed and creativity are essential in creating goal scoring opportunities and delivering an advantage. In the Reserves for 2021, we were fortunate to have a number of new players with skill, speed and tenacity. Their growth was impressive and encouraging and they went on to play Senior team football, score goals and become valuable and respected members of the Senior team.

Team spirit, player attitudes and commitment were inspiring throughout the season. Quality, intelligence and sportsmanship are values that have underpinned MUSC over the decades and the Men's State 5 squad has been characterised by those in 2021.

On a personal level I had a lot of fun and I am grateful for the opportunity to coach the team and work along with Mat and key stakeholders. I am grateful to players who agreed to play in new or experimental roles.

Overall, I was very fortunate to work with players of fantastic playing quality, sharp discipline, willingness to learn and listen and with a wonderful attitude. Our performances this season are a testament to that.

MVP
Duncan Wallace

Runner-up MVP
Nathan Brock

Top Goalscorer
Duncan Wallace
8 goals in 8 games

Coach's Award
Christian Bianchi

Metro 1 Blues

Report by Lachlan Boughton

Season 2021 for the Metro 1 Blues was a challenging one both on and off the field.

The squad of 20 players included 8 players who were new to the Club. Only 5 players in the squad had played together in the previous playing season in 2019 (2020 having proceeded with no games).

Ultimately, the squad finished with 2 wins, 1 draw and 7 losses to be 9th place and one victory away from 8th. No doubt a disappointing result as this put the team in the relegation zone and well off finals football which it had played in 2018 and 2019. Having said that, I am confident that the team stood a good chance of moving up the ladder had the full season been completed.

Unfortunately, absences and long-term injuries throughout the course of 10 game season made it difficult to field a full strength squad for any consistent period of time. Our best XI based on best and fairest votes did not ever play a single game together. Neither did our top 5 best and fairest players -- being Henry Hurd (82 votes), Michael Sandford (68 votes), Ben Marshall (47 votes), Ben Grillo (67 votes) and Andre Dowsett (66 votes).

Despite the disappointing overall results there were many highlights during the season and it was good to be back on the pitch playing having missed all of 2020 due to COVID-19. The derby match with the Metro 1 Rangers is worthy of mention. The event was held under lights on a Monday night before a good crowd and cameras. Both teams fielded some marquee players for the occasion. For the Blues, we recruited into the team the over 35s top goal scorer, Quentin Mahieu as well as Metro 4 hot prospect Xander Xu. Both players provided valuable contributions in the 1-1 draw.

Congratulations to the Blues award winners, Henry Hurd (MVP), Michael Sandford (MVP runner-up), Ben Marshall (coach's award) and Renato Ferrari (top goal scorer). We look forward to seeing you continue your MUSC careers next year.

Special thank you to the MUSC Board for their fantastic work in putting together the season in the very tough circumstances that COVID-19 brought. Thank you also to all the volunteers from the other MUSC teams who assisted with various tasks at various stages so as get us all on the pitch and playing.

MVP
Henry Hurd

Runner-up MVP
Michael Sandford

Top Goalscorer
Renato Ferrari

Coach's Award
Ben Marshall

Metro 1 Rangers

Report by Theo Paraskevas

After a long year on the sidelines, we could not wait to get back on the pitch in 2021! Preseason for the Metro 1 Rangers started in early January together with our State 4 team. Our preseason results were largely positive, with the combination of new and returning players showing promising signs. The highlight was an 8-1 drubbing of our cross-town rivals, the MUSC Blues.

There were high expectations for the season going into our Round 1 fixture vs Old Scotch Blues. However, our hopes were quickly dashed after conceding an own goal in the first minute and then soon finding ourselves down 3-0. We continued to battle and after a header from captain Nathan Scott and a cracker from Salim Bahamdun in the second half, we were back in the game and were unlucky to not pinch a point late with a flurry of attacks in the final minutes. Despite the result, it was an impressive fight back!

Our Round 4 Monday Night Derby vs MUSC Blues was a highlight of the season with bragging rights on the line. The boys were pumped after a solid week of training and keen to put on a show under lights in front of a vocal crowd. We dominated early play and Salim put us ahead with a sublime finish in the top corner. MUSC Blues worked their way back into the match and scored an equaliser early in the second half. In true derby spirit, there were fierce challenges all game and Reynold Wong was lucky to escape with a yellow card after laying out an opponent (despite calls from the Blues to send him off!). We pressed for the winner in the second half, with numerous opportunities either saved, hitting the post or sailing wide. We scored what we thought was the winner however the referee disallowed the goal and cut our celebrations short – a controversial end to an intense derby!

Our first win of the season came in Round 5 vs Old Scotch Thirds. The first half was our best half of football all season and we dominated the opposition across the park. After goals from Shahnawaz Ali Khan, Michael Valenta and Hamish Stafford, we were up 3-1 at half time. We could taste victory and were committed to securing our first 3 points. Old Scotch pressed hard in the second half and scored early to make it 3-2. Despite the immense pressure, we defended exceptionally well as a team for the rest of the half and then Hamish took centre stage late to seal the victory with an amazing goal, lobbing the keeper from halfway (some say better than David Beckham's cracker vs Wimbledon back in 1996!) The team song was definitely sung with gusto after that win!

It was a challenging season overall and although we didn't have much success with our results, there were some fantastic learning and development opportunities for our younger players to play against more experienced and physically stronger teams. It was great to see several players also step up to play for our State 4 Reserves and Seniors throughout the season.

Best and Fairest for the season was Sean Smith (great goalkeeper and even better bloke) and top goal scorer was Hamish Stafford with 3 goals (sadly heading overseas next season – you will be missed). We also farewell club great Matthew Ross and wish him all the best with fatherhood!

Thanks to all the boys for their commitment and effort during the season and look forward to coaching you all again in 2022!

MVP
Sean Smith

Runner-up MVP
Mario Di Gregorio

Top Goalscorer
Hamish Stafford

Coach's Award
Nathan Scott

Metro 4

Report by Jordon English

The short story: just a good bunch of blokes playing some cracking, entertaining football and having loads of fun. Pity the season came to such an abrupt close!

The Metro 4 squad had some fresh faces this season, and with that came a fair bit of gelling and getting everyone on the same page with the way we wanted to play. Dan Tan orchestrated a simple 4-4-2 foundation relying on lots of pressing in midfield and upfront, quick passing and bombarding the wings with some (very) fast wingers and full backs. Physically, it demands a lot from our players and our pre-season results perhaps suggested everyone was getting accustomed to the new system. However we kicked off the season with 2 wins on a trot, a tentative 2-0 win followed by a 4-0 win at home showed the system was working.

Perhaps we went into round 3 with a bit too much confidence, as we took a hit with a 4-1 loss to Essendon Royals. This was followed by a draw away from home but despite the disappointing results, Dan and I knew the team was capable of much better and we just needed to stick to the system we had in place.

And boy, did our players respond. Metro 4 built up a lovely 5 game picket fence of victories, scoring 32 goals and conceding a measly 4 goals in the process. A strong theme in our games was scoring the majority of our goals in the last 30 minutes of a game. While we were often nabbed a goal or two before HT, we constantly wore down the opposition with our superior fitness which often resulted in a deluge of second half goals. It is a real pity the season was cut short, we were sitting pretty in 2nd place and (as told to us by opposition teams), likely to be the only team to stop the undefeated juggernaut of RMIT. COVID meant we never met them but we really hope they will come back to M4 next season to add a new meaning to the University derby.

A 9 game season (and a goal difference of +31) really only gave us a taste of what we could have achieved as a team but we cannot wait until season 2022. We had great players all over the park but above all, every single person involved in Metro 4 made it a fun, happy place to be. Even when we had our little lull at the start of the season, there was a true team spirit around Metro 4 and that is what made the team feel special and go on that 5 game winning run of victories.

While a special congratulations go out to Simon taking out MVP and top goal scorer and Ben being runner-up MVP, every player shone for us this season and made themselves integral to our success. We were not an assembly of individual players or reliant on a few to win us games, we were a team of great humans and that is why Dan and I believe we will achieve so much with the same group of players in 2022.

MVP
Simon Panjkov

Runner-up MVP
Ben Watts

Top Goalscorer
Simon Panjkov

Coach's Award
Zander Xu

Premier League & Division 1 Blues

Report by Pat Kamphuis

After an extensive recruitment process in early 2020 which sadly eventuated in no season taking place, we were ecstatic to see so many of the same faces come back eager to go for the new year. Coach Kevin Ly, assisted by Michael Hardwick and Patrick Kamphuis, had a clear idea on the style of football we wanted to play for the season, and a distinct vision in which we would develop as a squad.

The team worked incredibly hard in pre-season, got plenty of sessions in each week leading up to round 1 and were well poised with plenty of match fitness coming from intra-club practise matches with various other MUSC teams. Both reserves and seniors lined up in a classic 4-3-3 formation, with high and wide wingers, 1 deep-lying midfielder and the other 2 central players with a bit more freedom further up the pitch. In the opening stages of the season while the team was still learning to play with each other, the plan was to not be too aggressive in our pressing and just gently forcing the opposition player with the ball to one area of the field and only leave him with one option. In a way, close down the space, rather than the player. This was well received by the squad in pre-season as we strung together some excellent performances and looked to be in a good position to begin the year.

The early stages of the season were promising for the seniors, winning 3 of our first 4 matches, including an incredibly satisfying 3-1 over PEGS, a team who we have had trouble getting one over in previous seasons. The reserves team had a difficult start to the season, losing the first 4 matches. However at half time of the 4th match when we were 3-0 down we made a minor tweak to the formation, pulling one of the central midfielders back to play a more defensive role, giving the backline more cover and allowing for a bit more comfort in possession. This proved to be a fantastic change of tactic as we went out to play one of our better halves of the season, scoring 2 goals against a strong opposition, but unfortunately falling short and losing the game 4-2. The next match we rolled out in the same fashion as we finished the week before and hit our stride, playing very confident football and scoring some well worked goals to win our first match of the season 4-1.

After a couple of weeks break due to a Victorian snap lockdown, we came back fired up and ready to play out the remainder of the year. The seniors opted a minor change in tactics, with an emphasis on the way we press as a group in our own half. We began the restart strong with a solid 2-0 win, however this was followed with two losses against very tough opposition, including St. Albans Vukovar, a club where seemingly you have to be at least 6' 3" to play for. The next game against PEGS we once again came out victorious despite nearly every single player on the field carrying some sort of niggling injury. A massive credit to everyone for pushing through that game. Another brief lockdown the seniors came back looking to continue the strong season performances going into the final third of the season. We fell on the wrong end of a 3-1 game against a very physical side in what ended up being the final game of the season.

The second half of the shortened season for reserves began with a match against fellow a MUSC, who were then top of the table. The match ended in a 2-1 defeat however our club members said that we were by far one of the better opposition they had faced which highlighted what we all were feeling; results weren't going our way but the football was good. A catchup game on a Wednesday night was easily our best performance of the season. Whether it was playing under lights, a midweek game, or perhaps the absence of a Sunday morning hangover, the whole squad was feeling very sharp and ready for the contest. We convincingly outplayed our opposition who had previously beaten us earlier in the season and went into half time with a 1-0 lead. Many more chances were created but unfortunately we were unable to take them, and conceded a late equaliser. Although the outcome was a draw, there was a unanimous feeling amongst the squad that we would come home strong for the rest of the season.

Unfortunately this turned out to be the final game of the season so we were unable to take that attitude forward.

A slightly empty feeling as the season abruptly finished left both sides wanting more, but we will be back again with the experience and knowledge to truly contest next season. A big thanks to Kev who worked tirelessly throughout the stop-start season, organising sessions drills and matches to get this team as much training in as possible. The players made an incredible effort, with many playing across the 2 squads and showing no sign of deteriorating despite being short on numbers in many games and often having limited substitutions. Although the season had an unwelcome ending, it was an absolute joy and something we will all look back fondly on as we prepare for next year.

Seniors

MVP
Robbie Ball

Runner-up MVP
Kieran Ryan

Top Goalscorer
Celeste Ellis

Coach's Award
Celeste Ellis
& **Matt Cohen**

Reserves

MVP
Marc Trsan

Runner-up MVP
Jude Holohan
& **Sanjay Vas**

Top Goalscorer
Marc Trsan

Coach's Award
Michael Hardwick
& **Pat Kamphuis**

Division 2 Rangers

Report by Tom Mullumby

The 2021 VSD2 Rangers were made up of players entirely new to the club and a wide range of playing history. Getting a team up on short notice was an achievement and says a lot about the playing group.

Round 1 was a hard beginning with a tough loss against PEGS but the players did not lose spirit and everyone in the playing group focused on team and personal improvement. There was more improvement in the following game with Cano Ergun opening the scoring with an incredible free kick against Albion. The team further progressed playing as a strong unit going into Round 3 with a 4-3 win against Footscray. After an opposition forfeit on the day due to player numbers in Round 4, the team followed up with a 3-3 draw against Carringbush with Sam Babidge scoring an equalising goal to make it 3-3 with the last kick of the game - another highlight of the season. After the next lockdown and going into the semester break the team struggled with numbers but it was a big achievement to get teams on the park with support from some other VicSoccer teams.

There was a run of a few losses when the season was recommencing, however emphasis should be placed on individual improvement for where we started on some pre-season sessions at Clifton Park. Whilst difficult to mention everyone this improvement was perfectly summarised by James Condos in goals who was making some fantastic saves later in the season.

Significant thanks need to be given to Cano Ergun and Xavier Butcher, who started off as players and escalated into captains, player-coaches and helping make the team what it was. To all the players, I hope you enjoyed a (somewhat stunted) first season at the club and encourage you to continue with your attitude and all come back again in 2022.

MVP
Christian Secatore

Runner-up MVP
Oscar Ablinger

Top Goalscorer
Christian Secatore (4 goals)

Coach's Award
Canaan Yung

Division 2 Blues

Report by Adeodatus McCormack

A shambolic preseason in which players and coaches came and went led to a difficult start to the season for the V2D2 Blues squad. Two hard-fought losses occurred, giving the players something to fight for. It is telling that the first goal of the season was an own goal by our opponents in the first game – a high ball blown into the net by a gust of wind. However, the start-of-season jitters soon calmed and the team and new coaches stepped up, claiming a first win in the third game.

With more structure in the squad, growing chemistry between the players, and an action plan, the season was looking up after the shaky start. This was swiftly followed by a 3-1 loss to top-side MUSC Bohemians in Round Four.

Undaunted, and knowing the team's potential with some magnificent players, the players set their sights on the top of the table. After this minor setback the V2D2 Blues never lost another game. A 3-1 win over (later) top side Oromo proved that the Blues were contenders for premiers. A couple of dropped points in draws were disappointing, but the players never dropped their heads, they got madder and more hungry for the wins – exactly what a coach wants. Postponements due to lockdowns were frustrating but the desire to play and win was strong and kept the team focused.

The final game before lockdown 6.0 was a rematch against MUSC Bohemians. Until this point, the Blues had played every top-half side, and missed 3 or so against the bottom-half teams. Raring to show the rest of the league that they were not a team to be taken lightly, this was an important game to prove how far we'd come as a group. The game ended in a 2-2 draw. The improvement the players showed was proof that we were on the up and up, and were ready to storm to the top of the table in the second half of the season - not ifs, ands, or buts.

The final lockdown was a great disappointment. Just when the team was coalescing and we were looking at becoming the team to beat, the wind was taken out of the sails. I would like to congratulate the team and players for an absolutely superb season. From players not knowing each other's names in the first game to becoming a title threat before the halfway point shows dedication, commitment, skill and above all a desire to push themselves to the limit that any coach would be proud of. And proud we are, Gulsher Singh and I, over what the team achieved. Special thanks to the V2D2 Rangers, both teams stronger and better for training and player-swapping between the two sides. Lastly, not to forget – special love and thanks to Tom Mullumby for helping and guiding us on every step of the way, his commitment and leadership were instrumental for such a successful season. Bring on 2022, the year the Blues take the premiership!

MVP
John Ishak

Runner-up MVP
Sean Hennessey

Top Goalscorer
Chris Bouras (5 goals)

Coach's Award
Rohin Jassani

Division 2 Bohemians

Report by Robin Quinn

We had high expectations going into the season knowing that we had a strong, experienced squad that could push for a top four finish and maybe a tilt at the title. This was tempered by the fact that we are predominantly an over 35's team, who are unable to train and play in a new all-ages competition.

We had a great pre-season, unearthing some fantastic new recruits, adding to a squad already brimming with talent. Yael, Chris Moloney and Quentin Mahieu gave us energy and enthusiasm going forward, whilst Leonardo gave us composure and style in midfield. At the back, Chris Moore and Eric Douglas fitted in well, giving us experience and quality.

Our season started well with a 9.1-win v South Park Rangers, with Quentin getting off the mark with 5 goals. This was followed by 10.1-win v Carringbush (Quentin 4 and hat tricks to Chris Moloney & Edu) and then a 10.0 v Meadow Park Eagles (Quentin with a cheeky 6). We were playing some quality football albeit against weak opposition, but with the drive and motivation everyone was showing, we were now confident we could beat anyone.

Up next came the Uni Blues in Harry Gills 700th game. Harry, as we all know, is a legend of the club and the Bohemians are his brainchild. To reach such a milestone and to be playing it against his beloved Uni Blues was a special moment. Harry took the 'kick off' with our special guest, Mineiro, a former Brazilian international, who seemed a bit confused to be tapping the ball to a rather shabby looking 60-year-old wearing orange clown's boots. Fortunately, Harry didn't score, and we still ended up 3.1 winners in a landmark game for the club and for Harry Gill.

PEGS were next on their ridiculously big pitch. We knew this was going to be a difficult game and went 1.0 down in the first half. Thankfully, we pulled one back just before half time and, inspired by our captain Eoin Kearns, we played an excellent second half, culminating in a wonder goal by Myles Harry to break PEGS' resilience, before running out 4.2 winners.

Things seemed to get a bit hazy after that with byes and cancellations. Our next game was a top-of-the-table clash against Oromo FC. Despite being the better team in the first half and creating lots of chances we ended up drawing 2.2 after we lost momentum after making too many changes at a crucial time in the game.

Lockdowns came and went and the teams we played then seemed to get younger and faster! That didn't dampen our spirit and we went on to beat South Park Rangers 4.1 with Frank Lamari coming off the bench to score a "stunning" second half hat-trick that has been described as the worst ever seen!

We then went away to beat Meadow Park Eagles 6.4 in an end-to-end game under lights with Quentin banging in 4.

The season ended prematurely (and rather frustratingly) with us drawing 2.2 v Uni Blues. We let go of a 2.0 lead after some terrible goalkeeping allowed a spirited Blues to get back into the game and push us all the way. This was disappointing as we didn't know it would be last game of the season and we were just getting started.

At times the football we played was breath-taking. We controlled games and moved the ball around with precision and purpose, taking teams apart, creating space and numerous chances. We were creative and clinical going forward and miserly and organized in defence despite not having a proper keeper!

The stats speak for themselves. We were unbeaten and finished 3 points off the lead with 2 games in hand. We had the best goal difference (+36), the most goals (50) and the best defence (-14) which is why I believe that we would have walked away with the title.

Finally, a big thanks goes out to the committee, who do so much for this club and to assistants, Harry and Stat, who do so much behind the scenes for the Bohemians and make them tick.

Stat's efforts on and off the pitch as player and manager complement each other perfectly. He works tirelessly and consistently, always supporting others by getting the best out of himself and those around him. His efforts are much appreciated by everyone but especially by me, as he does so much behind the scenes just to get us on the pitch.

Harry is the beating heart of this team and as assistant coach always offers views and opinions that are challenging and supportive (as long as he's in the starting line-up!). It was great to continue to share this journey with him and to be there at his 700th.

Harry started this, as he wanted a team that could be competitive and play attractive, free-flowing football, that was fun to play: win, lose, or draw. I don't know much about the losing bit, but we certainly had a great time winning. I couldn't be prouder of what this group achieved and only hope that next season we get a chance to finish the job off properly.

MVP
Quentin Mahieu

Runner-up MVP
Chris Moloney

Top Goalscorer
Quentin Mahieu (24 goals)

Coach's Award
Pete Ross

Division 1 Rangers

Report to come.