

ON THE BALL

2024

WINTER
SPORT
PREVIEW



Back-to-back?

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FRONT PAGE: Angaston player/coach Bec Higgins and South Gawler's Bailey Fielke will both be looking to repeat their premiership successes from 2023.
PHOTO: Mark Willoughby

WELCOME TO SEASON 2024

THE Bunyip is proud to present our 13th annual On The Ball magazine, where we shine a light on the upcoming winter sport season in Gawler, the Barossa Valley and surrounding areas.

With interviews from more than 30 A grade football, Senior Women's football and Senior 1 netball coaches, On The Ball is the perfect place to catch up on what is always a busy off-season.

Incredibly, both the BL&G and the APFL are coming off seasons where both minor premiers – South Gawler and Two Wells – combined for a perfect 32-0 record in the home-and-away season.

Meanwhile, Angaston's Senior 1 netball triumph snapped a 57-year drought, and the Panthers are not about to let their rare premiership window slam shut without a fight.

The Gawler Eagles are under new leadership with new head coach and technical director Terry Frangakis recently arriving at the club, while the Central District Lions have supercharged their men's and women's NBL1 Central teams with a spectacular recruiting period.

There is plenty of high-quality action about to unfold over the next six months, and if you want to be ON THE BALL, there is no better way to prepare.



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a successful season in 2024

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BAROSSA, LIGHT & GAWLER FOOTBALL AND NETBALL FIXTURE

ROUND 1 *Apr 13*

South Gawler v Nuriootpa
 Freeling v Gawler Central
 Angaston v Tanunda
 Willaston v Barossa District (6pm)
BYE: Kapunda

ROUND 2 *Apr 20*

Tanunda v Willaston
 Gawler Central v Angaston
 Nuriootpa v Freeling
 Kapunda v South Gawler
BYE: Barossa District

ROUND 3 *Apr 25 & 27*

APRIL 25 Angaston v Nuriootpa (2.30pm)
 Willaston v Gawler Central (6pm)
APRIL 27 Freeling v Kapunda
 Barossa District v Tanunda
BYE: South Gawler

**ANZAC
 ROUND**

ROUND 4 *May 4*

Gawler Central v Barossa District
 Nuriootpa v Willaston
 Kapunda v Angaston
 South Gawler v Freeling
BYE: Tanunda

ROUND 5 *May 11*

Angaston v South Gawler
 Willaston v Kapunda
 Barossa District v Nuriootpa
 Tanunda v Gawler Central
BYE: Freeling

ROUND 6 *May 18*

Nuriootpa v Tanunda
 Kapunda v Barossa District
 South Gawler v Willaston
 Freeling v Angaston
BYE: Gawler Central

ROUND 7 *May 25*

Willaston v Freeling
 Barossa District v South Gawler
 Kapunda v Tanunda
 Gawler Central v Nuriootpa
BYE: Angaston

ROUND 8 *Jun 1*

Barossa District v Angaston
 Tanunda v Freeling
 South Gawler v Gawler Central
 Nuriootpa v Kapunda
BYE: Willaston

JUNE LONG WEEKEND *June 8*

ROUND 9 *Jun 15*

Gawler Central v Kapunda
 South Gawler v Tanunda
 Freeling v Barossa District
 Angaston v Willaston
BYE: Nuriootpa

ROUND 10 *Jun 22*

Nuriootpa v South Gawler
 Gawler Central v Freeling
 Tanunda v Angaston
 Barossa District v Willaston
BYE: Kapunda

ROUND 11 *Jun 29*

Willaston v Tanunda
 Angaston v Gawler Central
 Freeling v Nuriootpa
 South Gawler v Kapunda
BYE: Barossa District

ROUND 12 *Jul 6*

Kapunda v Freeling
 Nuriootpa v Angaston
 Gawler Central v Willaston
 Tanunda v Barossa District
BYE: South Gawler

COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS *July 13-14 – Victor Harbor*

ROUND 13 *Jul 20*

Barossa District v Gawler Central
 Willaston v Nuriootpa
 Angaston v Kapunda
 Freeling v South Gawler
BYE: Tanunda

ROUND 14 *Jul 27*

South Gawler v Angaston
 Kapunda v Willaston
 Nuriootpa v Barossa District
 Gawler Central v Tanunda
BYE: Freeling

ROUND 15 *Aug 3*

Tanunda v Nuriootpa
 Barossa District v Kapunda
 Willaston v South Gawler
 Angaston v Freeling
BYE: Gawler Central

ROUND 16 *Aug 10*

Freeling v Willaston
 South Gawler v Barossa District
 Tanunda v Kapunda
 Nuriootpa v Gawler Central
BYE: Angaston

ROUND 17 *Aug 17*

Angaston v Barossa District
 Freeling v Tanunda
 Gawler Central v South Gawler
 Kapunda v Nuriootpa
BYE: Willaston

ROUND 18 *Aug 24*

Kapunda v Gawler Central
 Tanunda v South Gawler
 Barossa District v Freeling
 Willaston v Angaston
BYE: Nuriootpa

1ST SEMI FINAL *August 31 – Angaston*

2ND SEMI FINAL *September 7 – Freeling*

PRELIMINARY FINAL *September 14 – Willaston*

GRAND FINAL *September 21 – Tanunda*



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New threats set to challenge two-horse race

OVER the past two Barossa, Light and Gawler Football Association A grade seasons reigning premier South Gawler has put together a 31-1 record, while 2022 premiers and reigning runners-up Nuriootpa sport a 27-5 mark.

Barossa District (20-12) is the only other side to even boast a winning record over that span, and the Bulldogs were unceremoniously hammered by 72 points in the 2023 preliminary final.

The undeniable recent history poses an interesting question: Is the BL&G a two-horse race once again? Or is 2024 the year another team ascends to break up the Lions' and Tigers' duopoly?

Willaston missed out on last year's finals by a single win, while the three teams that finished with 5-11 records – Angaston, Tanunda and Freeling – are all realistic candidates to jump into the top-four.

It is hard to ignore the recruiting efforts of Magpies player/coach Sam Colquhoun, bringing a serious SANFL flavour to Tanunda, while Freeling player/coach Nick Hales is also confident his new faces can guide the Redlegs to their first top-four finish since 2017.

Gawler Central perhaps defied expectations last year to claim fourth spot, but it could be a tall task for the Tigers to figure in September again after the retirement of two-time Schluter Medallist Charlie Molyneux –



South Gawler celebrating the 2023 premiership.

arguably the league's best midfielder from the past decade.

It may be a bit of a rebuilding season for Kapunda after winning only one game in 2023, but new coach Peter Rolfe has brought some talent and experience with him, so could the new-look Bombers surprise and force someone else into the wooden spoon spot?

South Gawler's reigning back-to-back Schluter

Medallist Steve Burton is expected to spend a fair chunk of the season with Adelaide's SANFL side, so who will put themselves in contention for the league's top individual honour this time around?

With new coaches, new star players and a reigning premier determined to shirk the 'favourite' tag, 2024 promises to deliver yet again in arguably South Australia's strongest local league.



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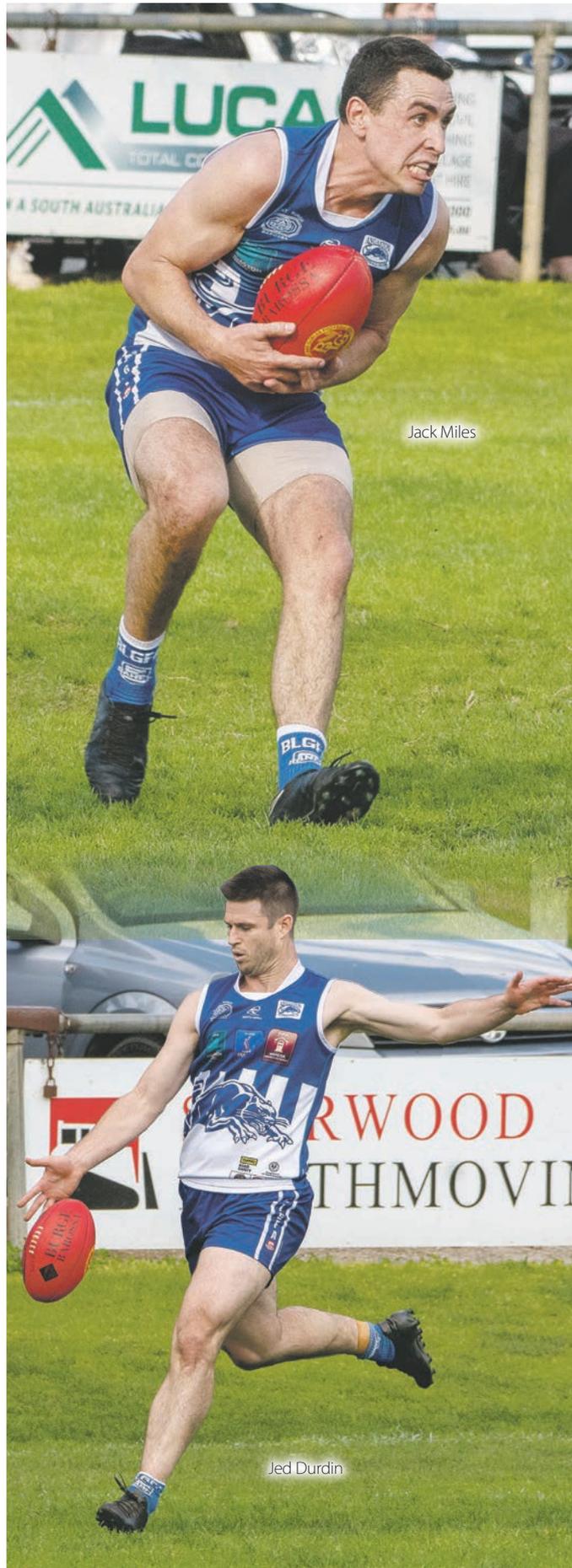
Craig Hadden

MOST RECENT PREMIERSHIP » 2003

HOME GROUND »
Angas Recreation Park

SEASON FIXTURE

Round 1 v Tanunda	April 13
Round 2 at Gawler Central	April 20
Round 3 v Nuriootpa	Apr 25
Round 4 at Kapunda	May 4
Round 5 v South Gawler	May 11
Round 6 at Freeling	May 18
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Round 15 v Freeling	Aug 3
Round 16 BYE	Aug 10
Round 17 v Barossa District	Aug 17
Round 18 at Willaston	Aug 24



Jack Miles

Jed Durdin

Coach chat

with Craig Hadden

Have there been many changes to last year's Angaston team?

"We've had a couple of players leave due to work/travel commitments, and have unfortunately lost Jayden Antonie for the season to a knee injury.

"We've had some players returning to the club like Jake Hood, Wade Richardson, and Joel Wilson – who had a year off last year.

"Jack Roesler has joined us from Sedan Cambrai and looks a good young player."

Who are some of the club's brightest talents to keep an eye on?

"Our under 17s played in a preliminary final last year and we're looking forward to some of them playing senior footy in 2024.

"Tyrell Burgess and Ethan Cain had a taste of A grade footy last year, and they'll be joined by the likes of Hartley Eggleton (when not at Centrals), Kynan Harvey, Liam Falkenberg, Marley Harvey, Tyler White, Jesse Parsons and Jordan Bevan – which is really exciting for the club.

What do you think will be the strengths of this year's team?

"I think we have good balance between our senior group and the under 17s coming up, while our second and third-year players will look to take further strides forward.

"We've had a year under our belts adjusting to how we want to play, which hopefully holds us in good stead for 2024. Our coaching structure has remained steady throughout the grades, which I think is important as well."

Is there anything you've identified as an area you need to improve?

"We've really just looked to build on and improve areas we focused on last year – if we can stay reasonably healthy throughout the season it will certainly help.

"Last year was one to forget in terms of injury, but our depth looks better with the injection of some good, young talent, and our core senior group staying relatively intact."

PLAYER TO WATCH

Jack Roesler

Angaston's big import this season, Roesler arrives from Sedan Cambrai Football Club in the Murray Valley Football Netball League, where the goal-kicking midfielder slotted 32 majors in 20 games across the past two campaigns.

Roesler will slot into an experienced Panthers midfield, bringing extra firepower to a group that already had plenty.

In 2023, only the league's top-three teams scored more points than Angaston (78 per game).

FIXTURE TO WATCH

Round 2 v Gawler Central

This past year Angaston conceded 327 points fewer than Gawler Central, beat the Tigers by four goals in Round 15, and took a three-quarter time lead into their season finale against eventual premiers South Gawler.

But it was Gawler Central playing finals footy, while Angaston was sent packing for an early holiday.

That fourth finals spot that the Tigers occupied in 2023 is considered wide open this year, and whoever emerges victorious from this Round 2 clash will put themselves in a commanding position early.



Steven Summerton

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Wednesday,
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COACH »
Eric Kells

MOST RECENT PREMIERSHIP » 2017

HOME GROUND »
Queen Victoria Jubilee Park

SEASON FIXTURE

Round 1 at Willaston	April 13
Round 2 BYE	April 20
Round 3 v Tanunda	Apr 27
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Daniel Kicks



Braden Owen

Coach chat with Eric Kells

Overall 2023 was a really good year for the team, finishing 12-4 and making a prelim. What are your expectations coming into your third season in charge?

"My expectation is that we are again challenging come the pointy end of the season. Going deep into the finals and playing in the grand final."

Have you had any ins or outs from last year's team?

"We have lost (reigning league goal-kicking leaders) Leigh Ryswyk and Darren Shillabeer (who kicked 55 goals each in 2023). Nathan Casboults will also not be returning."

"We have gained (former West Adelaide SANFL reserve) Tyler Harris, (former Barossa District A-grader and Central District SANFL reserve) Ethan Gant is returning (after a year at Balranald), (former Barossa District junior) Jack Carpenter is back after a few years with Central District and Will O'Brien

will be with us full-time after splitting 2023 between our As and Centrals under 18s.

Who do you expect to be in the running for Best-and-Fairest?

"Brendan Dew is our reigning Best-and-Fairest, and he'll be back again."

"Jake Mazzone, Ethan Gant, Jack Carpenter and Austin McDonald (if he doesn't get picked for the Crows) are all good chances as well."

Who are some of the youngsters to look out for this year?

"Lachy Warner, Cody Bahnisch and Nathan Johnson will all play plenty of senior footy this year."

Did you take any lessons from the prelim against South Gawler? Is there anything you will try to do differently, or was it just one of those days?

"A little of both. A real bad day and had plenty to get better at. Fitness level, experience in finals and becoming more organised. "We have an extremely young group and will continue to learn and get better."

PLAYER TO WATCH

Jack Carpenter

Key position players don't grow on trees, so to have a 195cm pillar returning home to the Bulldogs after also spending some of his junior days with South Gawler is a huge coup for Barossa District.

Carpenter, 22, kicked only two goals in his 34 combined SANFL and Reserves games in the past two seasons, indicating Central District preferred to deploy him in the back half, but that could change with the departure of goal-kicking leaders Darren Shillabeer and Leigh Ryswyk.

Regardless of where he lines up – big, young, athletic tallies are sure to come in handy in a league where speed has recently reigned supreme.

FIXTURE TO WATCH

Round 7 v South Gawler

A rematch of last year's preliminary final – a game where South Gawler rebounded from their only loss of 2023 with a resounding 16.17 (113) to 5.11 (41) bloodbath to earn another crack at Nuriootpa.

Despite the lop-sided final score, after halftime it was only five goals to three in South's favour, and with some valuable additions to the Bulldogs midfield this year, while the Lions anticipate a step back, Round 7 could tell a completely different story for 2024.



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COACH »

Nick Hales

MOST RECENT PREMIERSHIP » 1994

HOME GROUND » Emmetts Park

SEASON FIXTURE

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Coach chat

with Nick Hales

Over the past two seasons Freeling has jumped up from two wins in 2022 up to five in 2023, what would you consider a successful year this time around?

"We'll definitely be aiming for finals this year. When you look at the ladder we really weren't far off, and from the games we dropped there were definitely a few winnable ones that just slipped through our fingertips.

"We've got the group – good, developed youngsters who have essentially been blooded through those tougher years – so in my eyes they're a lot older than what they really are.

"The club's done a great job of retaining all the players from the past two years while I've been there, and then we've added to that as well.

"Blokes are putting in and they're keen to get that winning culture back to the club – the club deserves it after a bit of hardship through those Covid-19 years."

Have you recruited any sure-fire A-graders this off-season?

"We've had a few blokes come out this pre-season who I used to play a bit of footy with through Magpies, and a couple of good mates of mine.

"We got Brad Inglis, and his brother Dustin Inglis, Heath McClusky from Port Districts, and we're still working on a few other boys.

"Brad's a guy I had a relationship with since Magpies. He was living over in Victoria for a while but has moved back, and has had a newborn with his partner, so he was looking to get back to his family and play with Dustin, so we were able to package them up.

"They'll both play through the midfield and forward line, so they'll give us some good power through the middle and goal-kicking ability."

Who among the returning crop of players do you expect to be key contributors?

"Both Ben Heinrich (leading goal-kicker) and Scott Dutschke (most 'best player' selections) will be returning, and I think Jono Ross is probably in for another really big year.

"Jono has been building with a bit less responsibility on his shoulders, so I think he should really fire, and no doubt Austin Poulton will continue to improve with a lot of



our other younger guys as well. "Harvey McDonald up forward is looking really good this pre-season – we've got a lot of good development through our youngsters."

Do you plan on making any changes to the way the side has played over the past couple seasons?

"I think we'll definitely alter a few things, try to have a bit more of an easy game-plan – but at the same time the boys will still fall back on a few things and pivot and change when the game isn't going our way, or when we want to control it a bit better we will have things in place for that."

Is this your first time as a senior coach?

"It's my first time coaching at all. I've always been in leadership, and amongst the coaches giving input and asking for input, but yes it's the first time running a team.

"The first pre-season has been really good, we've had some good

numbers pre-Christmas and post-Christmas the boys are back out and into it.

"Everything we've been doing we've been enjoying. We're not flogging them into the ground, everything has a reason for it and that has all been laid out as professional as we can, and we've had great feedback from the players."

What role will you play yourself?

"I'll throw my magnet around a little bit, I'll try to find the best-suited spot for the boys. It might take a couple of games to figure all that out, and essentially I'll just find myself filling spots that are a bit needed.

"I've been playing mainly back-line and sort of rotating into the midfield to get a bit more size in the middle, so I expect to spend a little bit of time in the midfield, but the back-line is good as a coach to be able to watch and read the game playing out in front of you."

PLAYER TO WATCH

Austin Poulton

Freeling through-and-through, Austin Poulton has toughed out some difficult years in the Redlegs' A grade since making his senior debut back in 2019.

In that 2019 season he earned a best player mention in Freeling's elimination final loss, but since then the club has put together a combined A grade record of 7-39-2.

Freeling's A grade cricket captain has earned selections for the Central Zone Country Championships team in back-to-back seasons, and with his home team finally ready to make a finals push, the reigning BL&G Team of the Year wing could be in for a huge campaign.

FIXTURE TO WATCH

Round 1 v Gawler Central

The rapidly approaching Round 1 clash against Gawler Central will set the tone for the season to come from both sides as Freeling look to emulate the Tigers' top-four finish last year.

In their two meetings in 2023, Gawler Central won handily by six goals in Round 7, but as the season rolled on and Freeling found their footing, the Redlegs arguably were the better side in the Round 16 rematch, losing 13.5 (83) to 12.10 (82).

From zero wins in 2021, to two in 2022, up to five in 2023, coach Nick Hales is determined to taste September action, and with expected grand finalists Nuriootpa waiting in Round 2, a hot start is imperative.



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COACH »

Shane Dawe

MOST RECENT

PREMIERSHIP » 2020

HOME GROUND »

Gawler Oval

SEASON FIXTURE

Round 1 at Freeling	April 13
Round 2 v Angaston	April 20
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Coach chat

with Shane Dawe

After earning a top-four finish in 2023, how different will this year's side look?

"We've had a few that have retired, and Charlie Molyneux will be our runner for the year as he's decided to have a year off. He's getting a bit older and having a bit of a lifestyle change and is a big out for us.

"Will Schmidt has gone to PAC, and Leo Harrison, one of our imports from last year, he's off to Queensland to play footy.

"We've got some new players coming in. It's always going to be hard to replace Charlie with a Charlie, but we've got enough. A few kids will step up from last year.

"Dean Saunders will step up from 17s into As, and we've picked up two or three new players from outside the area, so that should add a little bit of depth for us.

"Tyson Friend has come over from Portland and he'll probably be in the midfield for us.

"Ryan Williams has come from the Eagles, SANFL level, and he should be able to hold down centre-half back for us. He's 190cm – a nice tall – so they'll be the main two ins for us at this stage."

Who do you expect to be in the Best-and-Fairest mix this year?

"Joe Bottin, our captain, he's a previous winner of our Best-and-Fairest but only played about five games last year.

"Brad Mitchell I expect to be around that range as well. To be honest it's quite open this year for us... to put a single name on it would be disrespectful to the rest of the group.

"It's a bonus for us this year – we aren't as predictable I guess – we can roll a few more people through the mids and not be as predictable, so we'll have a few go under the radar.

"Not many people know about our kids, so hopefully they can get under the radar with some teams."

You mentioned one graduating junior who will be in the As this year, are there any others in the mix?

"There's probably about four or five of them down at Central District to be honest.

"Ryan Vandermyle, Oscar King, Ezra Best, Jett Poulish, Tyler Best – quite a few of those kids are still eligible for 17s, and they'll get a look in again this year in senior footy.

"Most of them played two or three A-grade games last year, so nothing stopping us giving

them another go.

"There's no specific date about when they'll be back at the club eligible for selection – it's on Centrals and if they are getting opportunities down there."

What will be the strength of this team?

"I'd say our speed. We've recruited a bit more speed into the side, and we're not flushed with tall, so we need to play a faster style game, get a bit more pace into our team. "Obviously our midfield should still be quite strong and competitive, so that's an area we think we should be able to compete quite well in."

What do you need to improve on to become the side you want to be by September?

"We need to stop being scored heavily against. Last year some sides gave us a bit of a touch-up, so that's an area we need to tighten up.

"There'll be a change of personnel back there and, to be honest, last year we had a lot of churn of players going into 2023.

"It's a bit more settled this year, the kids are another year older, and we'll change up who plays in that back-six or back-seven so it will look a little bit different for us."



Bradley Pilkington

Blake Marsden

PLAYER TO WATCH

Joe Bottin

Gawler Central's 2022 Best-and-Fairest winner, the towering ruckman also took over the club's captaincy in 2023, although injuries restricted him to just six games before the Tigers' elimination final.

One of the few big bodies on a team that will be looking to win with speed and ball movement, Bottin's ability to pull down contested marks as an outlet option could swing results for Shane Dawe's side.

During his 2022 B&F campaign Bottin earned eight best player selections from 13 games, and he will need to be leading from the front if the Tigers plan on another trip to the finals.

FIXTURE TO WATCH

Round 4 v Barossa District

While there is always plenty of positives to be taken from a top-four finish, a 97-point hammering in the elimination final can leave a sour taste in the mouth.

Barossa District have lost star forward and leader Leigh Ryswyk over the offseason, and with both teams drawing winnable fixtures to start the campaign, there is a chance both teams reach this rematch undefeated.

The Round 4 result will tell a story one way or another about how much ground the Tigers have gained, or lost, on their fellow top-four side.



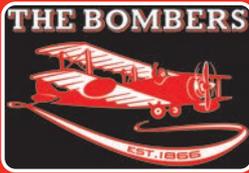
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COACH »

Peter Rolfe

MOST RECENT PREMIERSHIP » 2005

HOME GROUND »
Dutton Park

SEASON FIXTURE

Round 1 BYE	April 13
Round 2 v South Gawler	April 20
Round 3 at Freeling	Apr 27
Round 4 v Angaston	May 4
Round 5 at Willaston	May 11
Round 6 v Barossa District	May 18
Round 7 v Tanunda	May 25
Round 8 at Nuriootpa	June 1
Long weekend BYE	June 8
Round 9 at Gawler Central	June 15
Round 10 BYE	June 22
Round 11 at South Gawler	June 29
Round 12 v Freeling	July 6
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Round 14 v Willaston	July 27
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Round 16 at Tanunda	Aug 10
Round 17 v Nuriootpa	Aug 17
Round 18 v Gawler Central	Aug 24

Coach chat

with Peter Rolfe

What is your footy background and what brings you to Kapunda?

"I played the last two seasons on Kangaroo Island, and then probably four years in the 'ammos' before that, and about 12 years at South Adelaide.

"I have no real ties to Kapunda – I was born and bred in Alice Springs in the NT – but Kapunda sort of tried to get me as a player a couple of years ago, but I'd already committed.

"They kept in contact, and once they knew that 'Buckets' was probably going to do a two-year term, we got the wheels in motion about coming out to coach.

"I'm absolutely rapt, it's been a great opportunity and a great start so far."

What was the allure for you to come up to the Barossa, Light & Gawler league?

"I've never really experienced the Barossa league, I spent a lot of my time in Adelaide down south, but I think just how keen Kapunda were to get me on board, really.

"I spoke to David and Tom Leslie in depth over a few months – caught up a couple of times, went out and watched a couple of games of footy.

"I suppose speaking to my wife, it was something I always wanted to do, and if I don't do it now, then when? The opportunity came up and I grabbed it with both hands."

How's your first pre-season been?

"It's been really good actually. We're a pretty young list – the average age probably wasn't much more than 21 or 22 last year – and obviously a tough year on the injury front, so we played a lot of juniors.

"I know Buckets's ethos was trying to blood young talent, and whilst we probably didn't get the wins we would've liked last year, it's put us in a really good position for the future.

"They've come in keen as. We started pre-season at the start of December – nothing compulsory, just a session in town – and we've been averaging mid-20s for the whole time, which is really good."

Have you picked up any sure-fire A-grade recruits this off-season?

"We have. We've got Scott Taylor, who is coming off a best-and-fairest last year at Uraidla – he's a good mate of mine.

"He's come over and he's one of those blokes that is just a natural leader, he sets really high standards for himself and for his team, so that's probably our boom recruit along with Matthew Rankine.

"Matt is another friend of mine who I played footy with at South Adelaide – obviously everyone knows his brother Izak, he's killing it at the Crows at the moment.

"What we tried to do is get a bit of experience in. Get some great footballers, but also really good people to come in and set the standards, drive those standards, and really show the young crew we've got what it's all about.

"They'll both probably roll straight into the midfield. They give us a bit of versatility as well – both can probably play forward, and both can play back if needed. Good ball-users who work hard.

"They're seasoned physically, both around 32 years old, so they've got bigger bodies and will take a bit of the heat off our young midfielders."

Have any of the returning locals caught your eye so far?

"We've had some really good buy-in from all the younger boys, but there have been two who have stood out especially – 'Mudgey' (Aidan Mudge) and Harry Wuttke. 'Mudgey is our reigning Best-and-Fairest, Harry was runner-up Best-and-Fairest, they're both about 20 or 21 years old and have come back this pre-season rock-hard fit,

setting all sorts of records in the running.

"They've been two who have really caught my eye in terms of what they can bring as players. To have a Best-and-Fairest and runner-up both around that age in a pretty handy competition adds a good string to your bow."

Coming off a one-win season, would you say this is a rebuilding year or do you expect to be competitive?

"I reckon we'll definitely be competitive. Going through last year, I know there were a couple really bad weeks, but the club's been really honest with me the whole way through and I think injuries always play a bit of a part.

"I think last year for Kapunda was probably as bad as it can get in terms of senior players being out for periods of time, but it was a sort of 'light at the end of the tunnel' situation.

"We got to play a lot of younger blokes who, instead of having 10 or 15 games under their belts, have played 30-odd A grade games.

"We're definitely hoping to be competitive – we want to win games of footy – but it's also a lot about making sure we look after the young boys and figure out exactly how we want to play.

"With a young group there will be some inconsistency, which we're prepared for, but all-in-all we're really looking forward to a pretty good improvement on last year."



PLAYER TO WATCH

Scott Taylor

Described by coach Peter Rolfe as one of two "boom recruits" this season, Scott Taylor arrives from Uraidla Districts after proving himself as arguably the most valuable archetype in footy – a true goal-kicking midfielder.

The 61-game SANFL veteran with South Adelaide kicked 21 goals in 21 games last year, leading Uraidla to the Hills Football League preliminary final and earning a Best-and-Fairest in the process.

Taylor will slot into the Kapunda midfield from Round 1, but also offers some positional flexibility after spending his SANFL years down in the back-line.

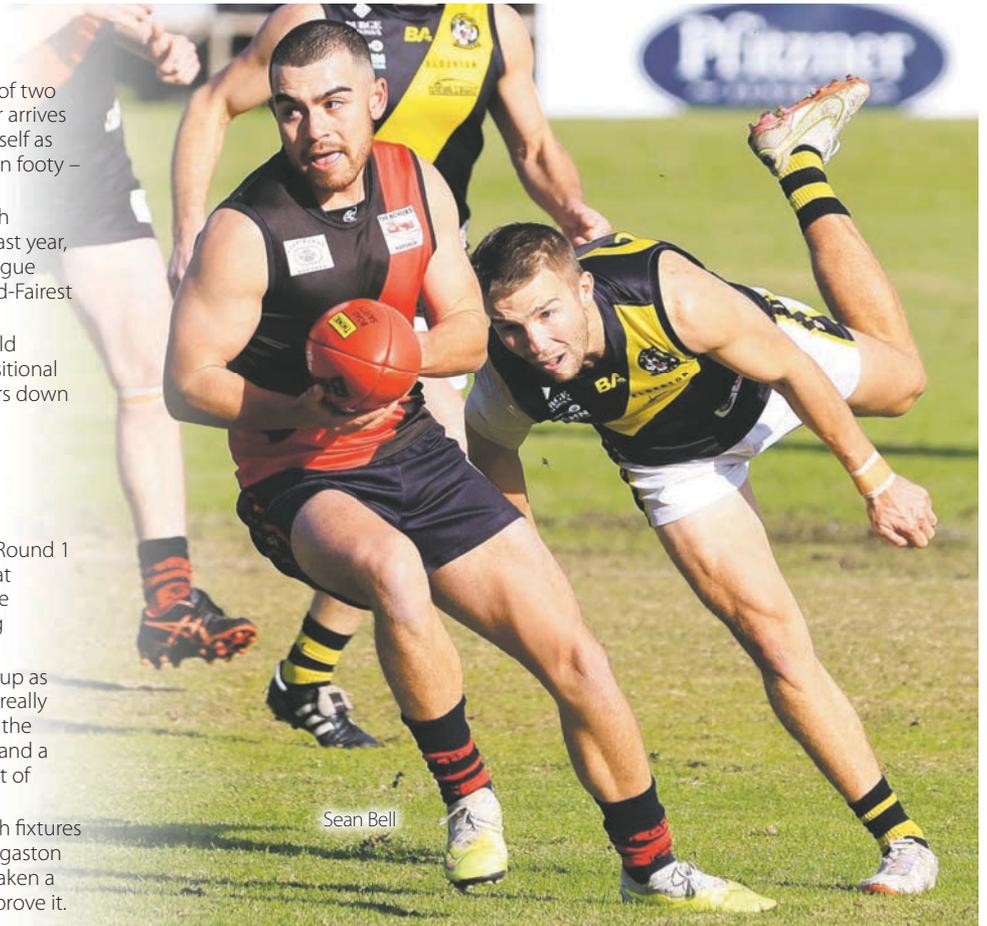
FIXTURE TO WATCH

Round 2 v South Gawler

Kapunda have drawn the unfortunate Round 1 bye, meaning we will have no idea what the reigning wooden-spooners look like under Rolfe until they host the reigning premiers in Round 2.

The Bombers will head into that matchup as resounding underdogs, with a win not really in the range of possible outcomes, but the difference between a competitive loss and a 100-point blowout could shape the rest of the year.

Kapunda follow the Lions matchup with fixtures against fellow non-finalists Freeling, Angaston and Willaston, so if the Bombers have taken a step forward they will get a chance to prove it.



Sean Bell



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COACH »

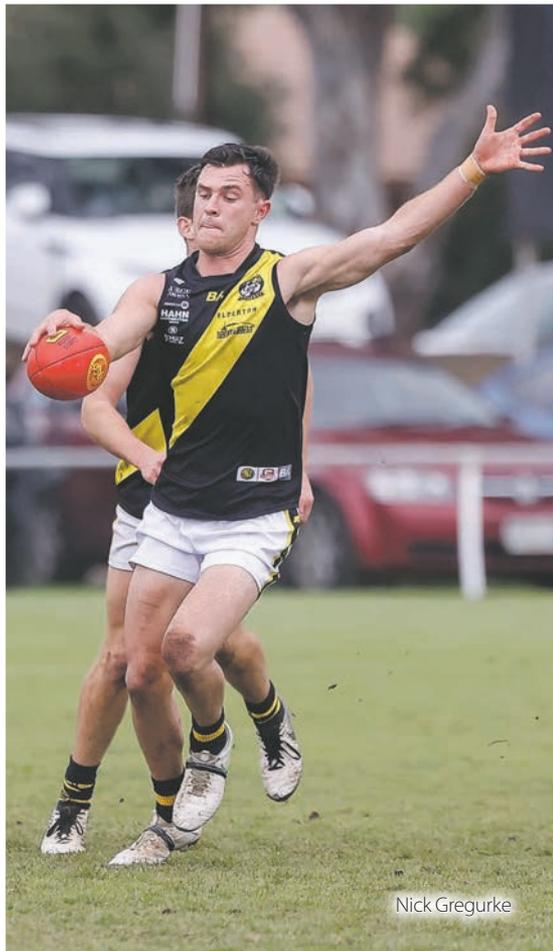
Nicholas Madden

MOST RECENT PREMIERSHIP » 2022

HOME GROUND »
Centennial Park Oval

SEASON FIXTURE

Round 1 at South Gawler	April 13
Round 2 v Freeling	April 20
Round 3 at Angaston	Apr 25
Round 4 v Willaston	May 4
Round 5 at Barossa District	May 11
Round 6 v Tanunda	May 18
Round 7 at Gawler Central	May 25
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Round 16 v Gawler Central	Aug 10
Round 17 at Kapunda	Aug 17
Round 18 BYE	Aug 24



Nick Gregurke



Mitch Norton

Coach chat

with Nicholas Madden

Any big ins and outs to report?

"We've got 'Canners' – Rhys Cannizzaro – come back to the club from Central District, which is awesome. He'll play in the midfield somewhere.

"Jackson Baldwin will be back playing. He's coming back from doing his knee a few years ago, so he'll be back in the fold as well. That's pretty much the two biggest changes.

"We'll lose Aaron Laverty – obviously he's been fantastic in the midfield for us – but he's going to Port Broughton or somewhere.

"We've managed to keep pretty much everyone from last year, plus the addition of 'Baldy'."

Been a great couple of years for the club – what was the focus this preseason and what can you get better at?

"We can always be a little bit fitter – we've had more of a focus on that – and finishing off goals. That's how we are going to win games is kicking goals.

"We've got pretty good defensive players, it's just finishing off and moving the footy a lit bit more efficiently so we give ourselves more opportunity."

Who do you expect to be in contention for Best-and-Fairest this year?

"Probably Nick Gregurke is going to be right up there. Lachie Westlake as well – he's one of our better defenders.

"Obviously we've got Mitch Norton whose won our last two Best-and-Fairests – they're probably the three standouts."

You mentioned your strong talent in the backline – how can you use that strength to your advantage going forward?

"What we've done this preseason is try and move the footy differently and trying a couple of different setups and a couple of different ways to exit.

"We don't really need to reinvent the wheel, we've got some really good players, and the way that we've been playing the last couple of years, that brand of footy has done really well for us.

"We don't want to change too much and try and do something completely different – probably just the way we move the footy out of defence slightly to give us the best opportunity to go forward in a different way."

Where do you need to improve to become the team you want be by September?

"Just finishing off. We create plenty of opportunity, but it's just finishing off up forward and putting a score on the board is going to be important to us.

"We've given ourselves plenty of opportunity over the last couple of years and we want to win big and lose small I guess. We are trying to put more scoreboard pressure on and win by four, five or six goals; not just limping across the line."

PLAYER TO WATCH

Mitch Norton

In the thick of the conversation for the BL&G's best key defender, Nuriootpa's reigning back-to-back Best-and-Fairest is the centrepiece of arguably the league's best defence.

Though slightly undersized compared to some of the key forwards he matches up on, Norton's physical strength, ability to win the positioning battle early, and propensity to pull down contested intercept marks means long, high kicks inside-50 play right into the Tigers' hands.

Together with fellow Team of the Year defender Lachie Westlake and player/coach Nick Madden, Nuri's backline have held opponents to an average of just 52 points per game across the past two seasons, trailing only South Gawler (47 points conceded per game).

FIXTURE TO WATCH

Round 1 at South Gawler

Nuri led at quarter-time, half-time and three-quarter time in last year's grand final as they hunted their second consecutive grand final victory against South Gawler, only to come up eight points short after a thrilling finish.

All off-season the Tigers have had that sour taste in their mouths, and the schedule-makers made sure they would not have to wait long to get their hands on the Lions once again.

Opening the season with a trip to the Lions' den gives Nuriootpa a chance to not just recover some measure of bragging rights over the back-to-back minor premiers, but an opportunity to hand their recent rivals the worst possible start to their campaign.



Scott Bentley

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COACH »

Gavin Chaplin

MOST RECENT PREMIERSHIP » 2023

HOME GROUND »
Eldred Riggs Reserve

SEASON FIXTURE

Round 1 v Nuriootpa	April 13
Round 2 at Kapunda	April 20
Round 3 BYE	Apr 25
Round 4 v Freeling	May 4
Round 5 at Angaston	May 11
Round 6 v Willaston	May 18
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Round 17 at Gawler Central	Aug 17
Round 18 at Tanunda	Aug 24

Coach chat

with Gavin Chaplin

Have you had any big outs from last year's premiership team?

"We've had lots of big outs. (Jackson) Dare retired, (Michael) Dejonge Cairns, (Connor) Willsmore injured, (Cody) Gilchrist is with Port Adelaide, (Jackson) Penrose injured, (Steve) Burton is a Crows SANFL top-up player."

Have you been able to replace them?

"We're not a club that ever goes out and recruits heavily. We've been a club that has been so good, we've got a great culture and a great history.

"As you know we've been the best side for three years if not four, so we've got three (recruiting) points.

"When you are really good and successful, you are inhibited by what you can recruit aren't you. The competition is always trying to pull back the good sides, so we are limited in what we can replace."

Do you think that's fair?

"I think it is a very unfair competition, I always have thought that. I'm not sure why we are different to the Adelaide Footy League where they all get 15 points every year.

"We don't like the system... if you win too many games over a two-year period it limits you on how many points.

"We've been really good obviously, so it is what it is. We'll just soldier on, you can't do anything about it."

With some spots to fill, have any of the reserves been catching your eye this preseason?

"Oh yeah, we've got some nice depth and that's probably one of the reasons we've been pretty good.

"There's probably 10 blokes that will play A grade early this year – Callum Fielke, Zac Piddington, Max Kershaw, Brock Judd-Smith, Joseph Arnold, Boyd Worden, just to name a few. They'll all come into the equation for Round 1 with the blokes that we've lost.

"They've all been really good players for a couple of years at the level below, so we'll continue to make developing depth a focus, which will hopefully continue to make us a really competitive club."

With the big outs, who is still around that you expect to lead this year?

It's still going to be the same guys – it's Lachie Arnold, it's Jackson Press, it's Steve Burton who'll play



Jackson Press

some games, it's Henry Bennison, it's Bailey Fielke, it's young Joseph Fenwick who played a premiership in his first year.

"Bailey Thorp, we've still got Chris James around, Anthony Simpson, Matty Naumann. We've got still got enough good players that we are expecting to play finals footy.

"Our expectation is still to be playing finals footy."

Coming off a premiership how can you continue to improve?

"We're not looking at it like we are the premiership side, but we know we are a really good footy club with a great culture and a great history.

"We are all part of that history now – we've been able to continue great culture. We just want to be a competitive side week-in, week-out, which we've been able to do over the last four years since I've been there.

"That's our aim, we just want to be competitive and be as good as anybody, and that's all we can control. Obviously with the number of players we've lost we'll come back in the field a fair bit.

"The rest is up to us and how

well we can adjust with our good players being able to perform and our depth players to come up and play really significant roles. Hopefully they can do more than that and they can go to the next level, and then drop off might not be as much."

What do you think are the strengths of your side this season?

"The strength of our footy club is our culture, is our history, is our buy-in. We are all there for one reason and that's to play in grand finals, it's as simple as that.

"My history being involved at Centrals over that 10-year period where we had 10 grand finals, and I played there. Similar to that, once you create a good culture you can keep it for a long, long time.

"There's a turnover, but I'm confident that we'll compete pretty well and that's all we can ask for.

"Numbers have changed, faces have changed, but not much else has – we still expect to be a very competitive team."

PLAYER TO WATCH

Lachlan Arnold

Named Best-on-Ground in South Gawler's 2023 premiership victory, the Lions' explosive-leaping, smooth-moving ruckman will come into the seasons near the top of the Schluter watch-list. Earning a spot as the starting ruck in the BL&G Team of the Year and in Central Zone's Country Championship side, Arnold kicked 11 goals to go with 11 best player selections from 19 games last year.

The former Central District reserves talent will be tasked with leading a heavily revamped South Gawler list as they try to replicate last year's perfect 16-0 regular season record, and while he appears to be only getting better, he will have to do it while being the focus of opposition game plans.

FIXTURE TO WATCH

Round 10 v Nuriootpa

While last season's grand finalists open the year with a Round 1 matchup at South Gawler, the second meeting up to Nuriootpa on June 22 could be more telling.

Both teams will be looking to implement new faces to begin the season, but it may not be a stretch to say that whoever emerges victorious from Round 1 will carry the favourite tag the rest of the way.

Having faced off in back-to-back grand finals, these teams know each other like the back of their hands, so their last meeting before September – with bragging rights up for grabs – should be guaranteed fireworks.



Lachlan Arnold

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COACH »
Sam Colquhoun

MOST RECENT PREMIERSHIP » 2011

HOME GROUND »
Tanunda Oval

SEASON FIXTURE

Round 1	April 13
at Angaston	
Round 2	April 20
v Willaston	
Round 3	Apr 27
at Barossa District	
Round 4	May 4
BYE	
Round 5	May 11
v Gawler Central	
Round 6	May 18
at Nuriootpa	
Round 7	May 25
at Kapunda	
Round 8	June 1
v Freeling	
Long weekend	June 8
BYE	
Round 9	June 15
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v Barossa District	
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(held in Victor Harbor)	
Round 13	July 20
BYE	
Round 14	July 27
at Gawler Central	
Round 15	Aug 3
v Nuriootpa	
Round 16	Aug 10
v Kapunda	
Round 17	Aug 17
at Freeling	
Round 18	Aug 24
v South Gawler	



Bailey Smith

Coach chat with Sam Colquhoun

Have you landed any sure-fire A grade recruits this season?

"Yes, we've got Campbell Wildman who has come from PAC Old Collegians. He's played a little bit at Port and Sturt as well.

"We've also got Jake Sutcliffe, who has come from Unley Football Club. Both Campbell and Jake are former teammates at Sturt.

"Shay Linke from Central District and Lewis Cowham from Central District – they're returning, they are Tanunda juniors coming back.

"Another former Tanunda player Isaac Feltus, who had a year off last year, has also returned."

What position do you expect the new recruits to play for you?

"Jake Sutcliffe will play as a key forward. Shay will play as a key forward and midfielder, and the other guys are all mids – but they can play half-back, half-forward or wing and they'll go through the midfield.

"I think Lewis Cowham is going to be really exciting for us. I've really liked what I've seen there and he's a midfielder who can push forward and win his own ball as well.

"Shay Linke is going to be

impressive and Campbell Wildman is probably one who will fly under the radar – I think he'll be one of the stronger players in the competition.

"Jake Sutcliffe as well – his ability to hit the score board for us is probably what we've lacked the last couple of years, where we are quite competitive through the middle, but struggled to capitalise."

How big of a coup is it for the club to have three young home grown talents returning?

"Yeah definitely. Hopefully we can have them around for years to come, and they live locally, it's convenient for them and obviously there is the (recruiting) point factor that helps things out as well."

Have you lost any key contributors?

"It's up in the air what Lachie Earl is doing – he is more than likely moving on – but other than that we haven't lost any key contributors, no."

Are any of the graduating under 17s getting a look in the As?

"Yeah the main one coming up from under 17s will be Jack Collins. He'll hopefully play some consistent A grade footy. He looks quite a talent.

"At the moment he is still quite slender, has some good leg pace and neat foot skills – so he probably fits in across the wing, half-back, half-forward, any of those type of positions I can see Jack playing."

With the list you have and seeing them through preseason, what do you think are the strengths of your side?

"Probably going into this year we are going to be strong down the spine, and structurally we've got quite a deep, young midfield now.

"Hopefully we'll play a little bit quicker through the midfield and have a lot more dynamic guys going through."

Coming off a five-win campaign in a very bunched ladder, what would you consider a successful season?

"Oh we definitely want to be playing finals football again.

"Even though we only had the five wins last year, we were competitive in probably 80 per cent of games we played in. There was probably only a few where we were genuinely beaten from siren to siren.

"I think finals is a realistic expectation for us and winning a game in a finals campaign would be a huge plus for us. That's what we'll be striving for."

PLAYER TO WATCH

Campbell Wildman

Pumped up by coach Sam Colquhoun as perhaps one of the best players in the BL&G this season, former Port Magpie and Sturt midfielder Campbell Wildman is expected to hit the ground running.

Across his past two seasons with Prince Alfred Old Collegians, Wildman has kicked 13 goals in 30 games, leading them to consecutive Division 1 grand finals, including a premiership in 2023. In a Tanunda team flushed with former SANFL talent, Wildman will join Colquhoun and Lewis Cowham in what could end up being the league's best midfield.

FIXTURE TO WATCH

Round 3 v Barossa District

The Magpies are arguably the most likely team to jump up into the top-four this season, and with Nuriootpa and South Gawler essentially pencilled into two of the finals spots, Barossa District and Gawler Central are the teams on the chopping block.

The Bulldogs ended the season with a 12-4 record as a clear top-three outfit, but their most recent clash against the Magpies was more than competitive, with inaccuracy costing Tanunda dearly in the 12.9 (81) to 8.14 (62) defeat.

After opening this year's campaign with games at Angaston and at home against Willaston, the Magpies will travel to Williamstown in Round 3 with a chance to make a statement and build the foundation of a top-four record.



Tomas Hahn

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COACH »

Damien Herzick

MOST RECENT PREMIERSHIP » 1999

HOME GROUND »

Elliot Goodger Reserve

SEASON FIXTURE

Round 1	April 13
v Barossa District	
Round 2	April 20
at Tanunda	
Round 3	Apr 25
v Gawler Central	
Round 4	May 4
at Nuriootpa	
Round 5	May 11
v Kapunda	
Round 6	May 18
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at Freeling	
Round 17	Aug 17
BYE	
Round 18	Aug 24
v Angaston	

Coach chat

with Damien Herzick

After finishing one win outside of the finals in 2023, what are your expectations going into this season?

"We start every year planning to play finals at the end of the year and this year is no different."

Have you gained or lost any A grade players this off-season?

"Yeah we had a busy off-season and managed to get Justin Hoskin from Central District, Jayden Watson from Modbury and also Isaya Mckenzie committed to us full-time after spending 2023 with the Crows' SANFL side."

"We've also had no real losses to the A grade, which is great."

What do you think will be the strength and weaknesses of this year's team?

"Our strength will hopefully come from our depth. We kept just about everyone on the list, added some recruits, but also have some players returning from injuries, travelling, etc."

"Lots of areas to improve in, but mainly in our defensive stuff as a group."

Who do you expect to be in the Best-and-Fairest mix this year?

"Joel Holloway won our Best-and-Fairest last year and I expect him to be around the mark again."

"Also Justin Hoskin, Isaya Mckenzie and our captain Tyson Irlam will be big vote-getters."

Willaston has some of the most talented juniors in the league, who are some to look out for in the As?

"We are in a great space with our juniors. Heath Growden has really impressed in the pre-season along with Wil Tagg and Isaac Downie."

"We have a lot of players at Centrals (including Brodie Herrmann, Joel Kotsano and Charlie Moss), and while we hope they get a game there, we will welcome them back if they don't."

Who do you think will be this season's top-four?

"Apart from us of course I expect South, Nuriootpa, Barossa District and Tanunda to be up top, but I also don't expect too many easy games this year. The competition looks very even."



Joel Holloway

Tyson Irlam

PLAYER TO WATCH

Isaya McKenzie

While Central District 200-gamer and SANFL Life Member Justin Hoskin may be the headline arrival, the return of do-it-all midfielder Isaya McKenzie is a game-changing addition.

McKenzie helped lead Willaston as close as you can get to a flag without winning it when he was one of the BLG's most valuable players in 2021, kicking 24 goals in 19 games out of the middle for the runners-up.

He was so good that season he ended up being picked up by Adelaide as an SANFL top-up player, earning 26 SANFL appearances across the past two seasons, and at 27 years old he should be ready to pick up right where he left off.

Isaya McKenzie



FIXTURE TO WATCH

Round 4 v Nuriootpa

The Donnybrooks begin their campaign with matchups against three sides – Barossa District, Tanunda and Gawler Central – who all have finals ambition, but are far from sure things.

Willaston's first real test to see where they stand this season will come in Round 4 against a Nuriootpa side boasting a 27-5 record over the past two seasons, and regardless of what happens in the weeks prior, a win at Centennial Park Oval would announce the Donnys as true contenders.

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BAROSSA, LIGHT & GAWLER WOMEN'S FOOTBALL FIXTURE

ROUND 1 *Apr 14*

Apr 13: Willaston v Barossa District
Light v Gawler Central
Angaston v Tanunda
South Gawler v Nuriootpa

ROUND 2 *Apr 21*

Barossa District v Angaston
Gawler Central v South Gawler
Light v Nuriootpa
Tanunda v Willaston

ROUND 3 *Apr 28*

Apr 25: Willaston v Gawler Central
South Gawler v Light
Angaston v Nuriootpa
Barossa District v Tanunda

**ANZAC
ROUND**

ROUND 4 *May 5*

May 4: Gawler Central v Barossa Dist
Light v Angaston
Nuriootpa v Willaston
South Gawler v Tanunda

ROUND 5 *May 12*

May 11: Tanunda v Gawler Central
Angaston v South Gawler
Nuriootpa v Barossa District
Willaston v Light

ROUND 6 *May 19*

Gawler Central v Angaston
South Gawler v Willaston
Tanunda v Nuriootpa
Light v Barossa District

ROUND 7 *May 26*

Light v Tanunda
Gawler Central v Nuriootpa
South Gawler v Barossa District
Willaston v Angaston

ROUND 8 *Jun 2*

Willaston v Nuriootpa
Barossa District v Gawler Central
Angaston v Light
Tanunda v South Gawler

JUNE LONG WEEKEND *June 9*

ROUND 9 *Jun 16*

Willaston v South Gawler
Nuriootpa v Tanunda
Angaston v Gawler Central
Barossa District v Light

ROUND 10 *Jun 23*

Jun 22: Tanunda v Angaston
Willaston v Barossa District
Nuriootpa v South Gawler
Gawler Central v Light

ROUND 11 *Jun 30*

Jun 29: Willaston v Tanunda
South Gawler v Gawler Central
Nuriootpa v Light
Angaston v Barossa District

ROUND 12 *Jul 7*

Jul 6: Light v South Gawler
Tanunda v Barossa District
Nuriootpa v Angaston
Gawler Central v Willaston

COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS *July 13-14 – Victor Harbor*

ROUND 13 *Jul 21*

Angaston v Willaston
Nuriootpa v Gawler Central
Tanunda v Light
Barossa District v South Gawler

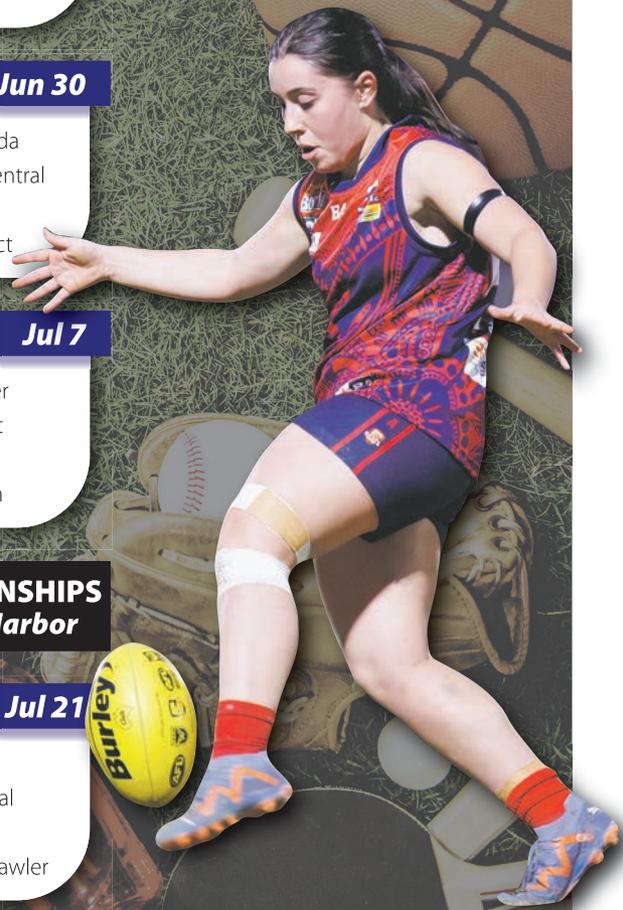
ROUND 14 *Jul 28*

Jul 27: Gawler Central v Tanunda
Light v Willaston
Barossa District v Nuriootpa
South Gawler v Angaston

SEMI FINAL *August 4 - Gawler Central*

PRELIMINARY FINAL *August 11 - Freeling*

GRAND FINAL *August 18 - Barossa District*





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Tigers on quest to become BLGW's first consecutive premiers

THERE will be one more team competing in the BLGW's senior ranks in 2024 as the Angaston Panthers re-enter the fray – meaning an even eight participants, and no byes.

Gawler Central will be looking to defend their premiership crown after coming from fourth in last year's finals, knocking off each member of the top-three in consecutive weeks for a hard-earned flag.

Recent history would suggest it is once again Willaston's turn to go all the way, having alternated premiership victories with Gawler Central every year since 2020.

With Gawler Central's grand final Best-on-Ground Shannon Murphy set to miss the entire season after rupturing her ACL, it could be tough sledding for the Tigers to hold off a Donnybrook side that went into the 2023 big dance as heavy favourites.



Gawler Centrals BLGW senior women's premiers

Sporting a 10-2 record last time around, Barossa District is prepared for at least a minor slide down the ladder as a swathe of former Angaston players return to the Panthers, although the Bulldogs' terrific junior stocks will ensure their floor remains relatively high.

Ella Mickan's Light could be the dark-horses this year, with the 2022 grand finalists boasting plenty of Central Zone

representative talent, while Tanunda, South Gawler and Nuriootpa are confident that they will benefit from natural improvement, muddying up the fringe final positions.

Willaston's reigning league Best-and-Fairest Liz Wilson is spreading her wings in the SANFLW, putting her availability up in the air, and leaving the top gong up for grabs in one of the strongest competitions in the state.

Coach chat with Brett Burgess

After not entering a senior women's team in each of the past two seasons, why does Angaston feel confident about fielding a side in 2024?

"I think the club feels in a lot stronger position now to get a team back in the senior women's because of all the work they've done on building a platform for the juniors.

"We have quite a few girls now that have become old enough to play up in the seniors, and amongst them are some very talented ones."

How did you end up putting your hand up for the coaching role?

"I've always had a passion to coach, I started out many years ago coaching junior colts at Hamley Bridge.

"That really introduced my passion and showed me that it was definitely an area in which I wanted to get more involved in.

"Although a different sport, I started captaining and coaching

the Angaston Cricket Club, and those eight years were such a great learning experience in how to deal with people, have tough conversations and bring a group together to install a belief that they can do anything.

"In the recent years I have become an assistant coach out at Hamley Bridge under Todd Miles, and have accepted the senior coaching role there this year, which I'm really excited about.

"All these things combined gives me great confidence I'm ready to take in the challenge of senior women's coach at Angaston. I'm super excited to get cracking."

All things considered, what would you consider a successful season?

"Obviously we have been missing from the league for a few years and I feel for us to have a team out there competing each and every week will be just awesome for the club and the girls.

"So success this year won't be winning or losing as such, but it will be the fact we are back out there having fun and being involved again.

"In saying that, anyone who knows me knows I don't like losing, so we



Miyu Endersby

will be giving it a red hot crack. "I'm just really looking forward to continuing these girls' development for the ones who have been playing, and then teaching any new girls to the game the basics and trying to get them all to play as a team."

Who do you expect to be some of your stronger players this season?

"I'm really excited to watch how

Hayley Henke and Sage Logan do, they're both very talented and haven't missed a session.

"I've always been very passionate about women's football due to my niece Katelyn Rosenzweig, who has played in the SANFLW since it started and was lucky enough to be drafted by the Crows a few years back.

"Hopefully she pulls on the blue and white Ango guernsey this year."





Coach chat

with Ricky Wilkin

Have you lost many players from last year's preliminary final team?

"Yes we have lost quite a few from last year as many of the Angaston girls that came to us last year have returned to Angaston to try and form a seniors team there.

"We are also a bit up in the air about a few of our other players as they have been selected to participate in SANFLW programs, and we are not sure if they will be permitted to play local football this year.

"Because of that, I don't have massive expectations this season. I see this year as a fantastic opportunity to build and create a solid base for our future.

"Numbers will be a challenge this season but we will continue to work on this, and hopefully everyone that plays enjoys the game and wants to play again next year."

Have you been able to secure any strong recruits?

"We have been lucky enough to have recruited two new exciting players this year, Abbey Harrison Rieffel and Kate Case. Both ladies live locally so that has been a bonus.

"We are still actively searching for more players to strengthen our side this year."

Who will be in the mix for the Bulldogs' Best-and-Fairest?

"Teagan Robins won our Best-and-Fairest last year, but it was very tight at the top with Ellie Ward winning our runner-up.

"Hopefully this year some of our young players working their way up through the ranks will contribute heavily in the seniors B&F count."

What do you think will be the team's strengths this year?

"This year will hopefully be a year that all the players will enjoy.

"It is hard to know what to expect from this group, but if we could have some fun and consolidate a foundation for a really good senior team in the future, that would be awesome."

Are there any graduating under 16s who will slot into the senior side?

"We have a few under 16s graduating into senior football, most of which have already had a taste of senior football in the past.

"Some names to watch this year will be Rainge Struck, Maya Troeth and Scarlett Wilkin – the latter two are actually still eligible for under 16s."



Ellie Ward



Amalee Struck



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Coach chat

with Paul Blacket

How did you become the man to take over in charge of the reigning premiers?

"I played most of my footy out at the Mallala Magpies, and in recent years my daughter Skye became interested in playing football, so we went out to Gawler Central in 2022 with a couple of her friends. "She really started enjoying it, and eventually the club asked me if I'd be happy to help out, because there were a fair few girls who were needing assistance since a number of the players were trying out footy for the first time. "I thought 'I'm already there watching, so I might as well help out', and then they asked me to be an assistant coach last year and I really enjoyed it.

"Jason couldn't do it anymore coming into this year, and the girls were hounding me to coach, so I figured I'd do it since I'd really enjoyed helping out and sharing some of the things I've learned over the years."

What was it like being a part of last year's premiership run?

"It was pretty special. We were a little bit undermanned all year, we probably didn't quite have as many numbers as we wanted to do rotations, and things just started to click the longer the season went. "They got their game plan going, and that run home and the grand final – I'll never forget that, that was awesome. "It was pretty special to get to do that with my daughter. She ran right up to me after the siren went, and she was crying – it was pretty emotional.

"Especially being an underdog – we were certainly not the favourite – but we told the girls anything can happen in finals, and we knew we'd be a tough side to play because we got on a roll at the right time."

Who has stood out to you this pre-season?

"Caitlin Cotter is an obvious one, she's been really keen and helping us get some new players. It's been great watching her footy grow. "From someone who hadn't played footy three years ago, to now being quite an excellent footballer, it's a credit to her. "Another one that's been great to watch has been one of the mums, Helen, who wants to come out and play with her daughter, Cassie Holland. "She's fully new to footy, loves her sport and obviously knows footy, but has never played it before, so I

think it's just great that she's giving it a go."

What is the situation with your SANFLW players this year?

"It'll be a little bit uncertain, because we have four players who will be playing in the SANFLW. "Shannon Murphy has actually done her ACL, we're all very disappointed for her, she loves her football and unfortunately she will be out for 12 months. "She will be sorely missed, but she is actually one of my assistant coaches this year, so she will still be very involved in the Gawler Central team. "We have Ashley Baker and Macy Young who are with the Eagles, and then Erica Rowe and Emma Keys for Centrals, so it will all depend on if they're getting consistent league games or not."



Kayla McInerney

Caitlin Cotter

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Mikaela Bailey



Ella Mickan

Coach chat

with Ella Mickan

Light finished third on the ladder and lost in the elimination final to eventual premiers Gawler Central, do you think your side can improve this year?

"Yeah, I think everyone is absolutely up for the challenge. We've got a really good group of under 16s coming through who probably last year gave us a fair bit of 'oomph' in our line-up as well. "With some of the names coming into the other teams it will definitely make it a bit more challenging across the board for our association, but we're always willing to give it a crack, and I think that determination will do us well this year."

Who are some of those youngsters that are really putting their hands up for the senior side?

"We've got Scarlett Bird-Fidge, Jess Jones, Olivia Leslie – there's a few really. They bring a bit of speed, good run through the guts and probably a good understanding of

the game.

"Those girls have been in it for long enough that they can sort of read the play a bit better than some of the others, and they understand the structure of the game.

"The young ones, because they've had a chance to start playing footy at a younger age, a lot of the kids these days have had footy as their main sport, whereas when we started a lot of us had netball, basketball or soccer as our main sports.

"Understanding that, their skill level is much different compared to when the Barossa & Light started out playing nine-a-side. I think in the under 16 competition in particular you can see the difference there, so coming up into seniors is just going to make them stronger and stronger."

Have you had a lot of list turnover this off-season? Who are the big ins and outs?

"For us we've had some big outs. Nicole Moss is one, she's moving to Tasmania, we've got one key forward who isn't 100 per cent sure if she's playing again... and in terms of getting heaps of new players – not a lot."

What do you think the strength of this side will be?

"Definitely our junior kids coming through will be our strength. Probably speed is the massive one for us, I think that was our strength last year and got us into the finals – speed and hard running."

What would you consider a successful season?

"I think making tracks on what we achieved last year. Obviously winning games is really important, especially earlier in the season before the SANFLW players and Development players come back in.

"That's probably going to impact our team a fair bit. Sasha Branson won't be able to play until we finish up with Development, myself, and then big names like Sophie Eaton, Jasmine Elsworth and Tess (Gerhardy) can't play if they've played League, which is my understanding.

"We're going to miss a few of those players, so making our mark on the competition early with the younger crew we do have is going to be huge for us to get a head-start.

"In terms of being successful, it

will be our retention of players, the improvement of some of our older players who have come in later – those are the kind of things I think are important for our development in women's footy."

With a lot of your key players not available for at least half the season, who would you say are some of the early favourites for best-and-fairest?

"Jasmine Elsworth was our best-and-fairest last year but she will be playing for Woodville-West Torrens in the SANFLW, so in terms of the players who will be there from Round 1 I'm going to say Scarlett Bird-Fidge.

"She's a young player – she could still play under 16s – but she went up last year as a small forward and I really enjoyed watching her play. "Her ground-balls, her one-on-one ability to win that contest, off the ground especially, combined with how clever she is around goals, she has a really good chance to poll some votes.

"Ebony Noack is another one, she's a really strong player off the backline and can run into the midfield, and at pre-season she has been doing really well so far."



Madeleine Rohrlach

Lily Guymer

Coach chat

with Shaun Ribbons

Nuriootpa returned to the senior women's competition last year and went 2-10 – what has been your focus coming into your second season in charge?

"We're looking to build on what we achieved last year. Obviously, we're trying to add a few girls who have played a bit of footy, because we have a lot of girls who haven't played a lot.

"So first year, just getting a team together, now second year we're trying to become more competitive, and more relevant in the competition.

"We had a team last year that tried really hard and competed really well, but we just weren't able to

hit the scoreboard against those good teams."

Have you picked up any big recruits this off-season?

"We got three. The first is Gemma Doughty, who was one of the captains at Central District back when I was there in those first few years (of SANFLW), and she's going to come and be an assistant coach as well.

"We also got Courtney Smith. She was at Centrals last year – she's Shelby Smith's sister – and she'll be similar to Gemma in that she will be helping coach as well as playing.

"And Jess Axford – she's a ruck from Centrals – so they're the three inclusions from a bit higher level that we hope can give us a bit of a boost and accelerate the process.

"Another big one is Renai Richardson returning – she was our captain last year and will be hugely important for us again."

Which of the returning players do you think will play important roles?

"I'd say the main ones are a couple of returning first-years. Em Boothey, she plays on the ball and I expect her to really improve.

"Maddy Rohrlach too, she plays on the ball as well. Just their competitive nature and willingness to get in and win the hard ball really caught my eye."

What would you consider a successful season?

"If we can still play with the attitude that we had last year – we need to maintain that – but I would be hoping that we can bridge the gap to those top sides

on the scoreboard.

"We have to hit the scoreboard more, and get a bit more footy in our forward half, so that will be a big focus for us.

"Seeing the girls improve will be the biggest thing – we've got a lot of girls who will be playing in just their second year – so individual and collective improvement will be what I'm looking for.

"We will be adding an under 16 team this year. We had a come-and-try day and 37 juniors rocked up, and as a club that age group is so important because you'd expect those to turn into your senior players.

"Being able to build teams from within your area and just add a couple – kind of like how the men do it – that's the aim, so this season is a big step in the right direction."



Sophie Bevis

Coach chat with Wayne Green

What's your coaching background?

"I've just come from Greenacres Football Club, before that it was Elizabeth and Ingle Farm for four years as senior women's coach. "I was looking around after last season, and I wanted to come to a country footy team because I know how great country football is, so when I saw South Gawler was looking I thought it was a great fit."

South Gawler is coming off a premiership in the under 16s, how can you capitalise on that to create the best senior team possible?

"The last few years I've been in the situation of building a women's program from scratch, so it's exciting to come somewhere that already has a strong junior setup. "If you run things right, your best juniors end up becoming your best seniors, so as a club we just have to make sure we're nurturing our talent and giving them every opportunity to become senior footballers."

Have you been able to secure any senior recruits?

"We've had a lot of new faces arrive at the club this preseason – more than a dozen – including a number of players I have previously coached, like Leasa Molloy, Tamika Brauer, Nyre Coffee and Jasmin Knevettt all from Greenacres.

"I'm proud of how many women from all over the place have decided to play at South Gawler this year – Zoe Kraft has come from Modbury, Kate Block is from the Tindal Magpies in Catherine, and Jamie Chapman played for the Murraylands Swans, just to name a few."

Who have been some of the standouts this preseason?

"Zoe Kraft is a talented footballer with plenty of experience, Kyleena Clark just keeps going, a true workhorse, and Anya Jackson in her first official senior year is as quick as lightning with fantastic skills.

"Teagan Lawrence, Jamie Chapman and Suzie Quintet are a few more that deserve a mention."

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Coach chat

with Nicola Biagi

As a member of Tanunda's inaugural senior women's team, what made you decide to come back this year?

"Tanunda is my home club, and the president has been asking me for a while now to come back.

"I'm a pretty loyal club person, so it was a hard decision to leave Angle Vale FC as they've been fantastic to me.

"I really am passionate about women's footy, especially at a community level, and when the opportunity came up to coach with my Dad at TFC I just couldn't resist."

What lessons have you learned during your time in the SANFLW that you will be able to teach your players?

"Fundamentals of the game, fitness for football and also how to recover/look after yourself post-game.

"I want them to enjoy it and be united on and off the field. I would love to see them execute everything we've worked on at training – especially clean fundamental skills."

Have you been able to bring in any senior recruits?

"New recruits locked in so far are

Bonnie Dodds, Neave Delaney and Shari Wilson.

"Bonnie is a versatile tall utility, which is fabulous, as we can play her where needed. Neave's left boot will come in handy out of the midfield into either forward or defence.

"Shari's experience, consistency and leadership will be handy all over the ground, but I haven't locked down where exactly we are going to put her yet.

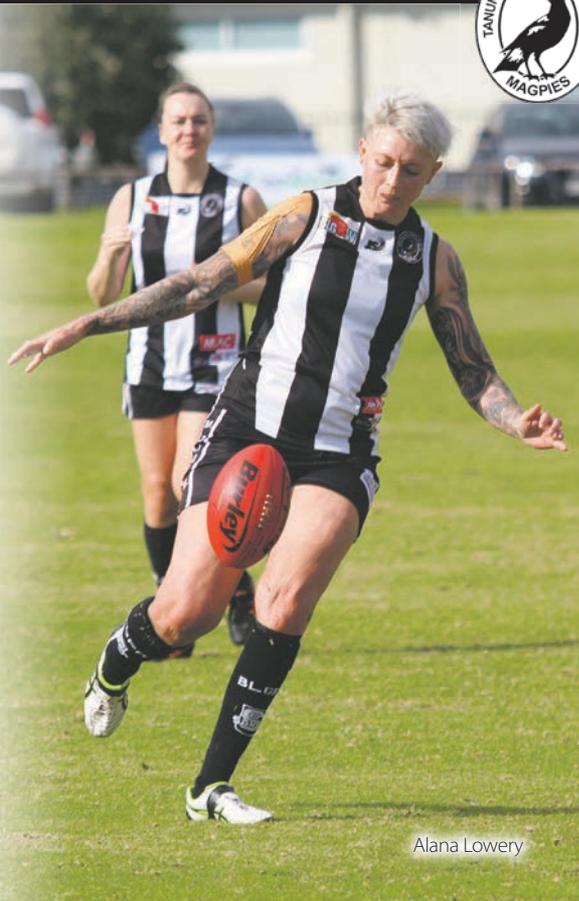
"I'm still working on a few others to lock in, but the great thing is we've had some previous players from other years showing interest in making a return too."

Who do you expect to be in the running for the team's Best-and-Fairest?

"It's hard to say this early on as I've not seen the girls in action. We've got some young guns, but also some experienced, consistently good players too.

"I think it'll be a tight race, but everyone's got their role to play. Keep an eye out for young gun Sonya though – I reckon she'll get a few votes

"The only graduating junior I'm aware of is Sonya Calyun, and she's a jet, so that's fantastic. Got a great kick, fantastic mark and reads the play well."



Alana Lowery



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Coach chat

with Max Bornholdt

Big shoes to fill – do you feel any pressure taking over after such a great run?

“Megs’ (Megan Boers-Veen) and Andre (Boers) have done a great job over the last few years. Hats off to them and the other helpers on where they have got the women’s program to.

“I don’t feel any pressure at all. My job is to teach the girls all the fundamentals that they haven’t learnt yet, and to help them grow as players.

“With that success will come, winning doesn’t always mean success. We have a very young team this year and not everything happens overnight.

“We are looking long-term with the amount of juniors we now have at our club.”

With a young team this year, who do you expect to be some of the standouts?

“Reese Chamings, Lillian

Bornholdt, (new recruit) Sarah Burns and (former South Gawler junior) Lauryn Farr are the ones I would be looking out for. They are just some of the exciting players we have this year.”

Have any of last year’s Willaston juniors made an impression during this senior preseason?

“A couple of 16s coming through that I’m excited to see are Chelsea Jasmine and Tayla Williams.”

Do you plan on making any changes to the Willaston game plan now that you’re in charge?

“We will adjust our game to suit our players this year. Every side is different each year, and each player plays a different style.”

What would you consider a successful season?

“Success will be measured on the girls’ improvement and understanding of the game this year, not on ladder position. Rome wasn’t built in a day.”

Reese Chamings



Nikita McRostie



Liz Wilson

Drought-breaking Panthers the team to beat

FOR the first time in 57 years Angaston will head into the Barossa, Light and Gawler Netball Association season as the Senior 1 reigning premiers.

It was a spectacular and deserved premiership run for the Panthers, who lost to minor premiers South Gawler by one single goal in the qualifying final.

Angaston refused to go out in straight sets, getting the better of perennial finalists Barossa District 42-35 in the prelim, before working their way back into the big dance and conquering the Lions 37-33 in the rematch.

Three members of that winning Ango outfit will not return in 2024, leaving the door open for some of the league's usual powerhouses. With back-to-back

minor premierships, a combined 29-3 record over the past two seasons and a flag in 2022, South Gawler will be desperate to wash the sour taste out of their mouths.

While Angaston's drought-breaking triumph was relatively unpredictable, the league has been incredibly consistent over the past two seasons, with Gawler Central and Barossa District joining the Panthers and Lions in finals action.

Nuriootpa has spent two years as the fifth-placed team narrowly missing the postseason, but the Tigers are in danger of being leapfrogged by a Willaston side who, under new direction from Steve O'Brien, were aggressive in their recruiting.

Kapunda has been in a lull after a long period as



Angaston Senior 1 premiers

a top four side, but that could turn at any minute when their standout Inter 1s arrive at the level with valuable reinforcements. At the tail end of the table Freeeling has sights

set on a step in the right direction after some handy additions, and Tanunda's new co-coaches will be scratching and clawing to avoid a third consecutive wooden spoon.

Freeeling defender Meg Cocks will spend the year as the league's reigning Best-and-Fairest in what is sure to be another high-quality season of elite netball.

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Coach chat

with Bec Higgins

How long have you played for Angaston, and when did the opportunity to coach come up?

"I played for Angaston on-and-off for about 15 years. I played all through my juniors and inters, and then moved away when I got married, and last year was my first year back.

"I played in the Senior 1 premierships team, and then coach Lou decided not to return this year. The club and I came to an agreement that we were willing to have a playing coach this year, so I put my hand up."

What has been your focuses during your first pre-season in charge?

"At the moment we are working on building up our fitness. We have five of our premierships players returning, so we are trying at the moment to just build up so that we've got another solid squad this year.

"Hopefully we can go back-to-back."

Who has departed from last year's premierships team, and how have you replaced them?

"Stephanie Sarro, Rachel Weidemann and Courtne Moulds won't be returning this season, but we do have our starting seven pretty much sorted.

"We have our five returning players, and we've bought up the Fiebiger twins – Libby and Molly – from our Senior 2s.

"We are still in the process of trying to fill in a couple of extra spots. We are in negotiations with an Adelaide player, and we also have some past Angaston players that are willing to come back and play a few weeks when we need fill-ins."

What did last year's team do so well, and what did you learn from that season?

"All season we knew what we were there for – we were there for a good

time – we didn't put any pressure on ourselves.

"Lou was an amazing coach and let us play to our individual strength. Everyone knew what role they needed to play and we all just went out there and did it.

"I learned to trust in my role. I'm one of those players that loves to float, I love to hunt the ball.

"But really in the Senior 1s squad it's really important to just play to your position and know that every single person on that court is going to do their role and their job and just to trust in that.

"That's something I'm definitely going to be bringing into this year. Everyone knows how to play, we've all been playing for a very long time, and we're lucky enough that some of us have grown up through juniors together."

Who do you expect to be in the mix for the club's Best-and-Fairest?

Tilly Hadden won last year's Best-and-Fairest, she's an amazing player, she can pretty much play anywhere and she can even shoot, so I might throw her in the ring.

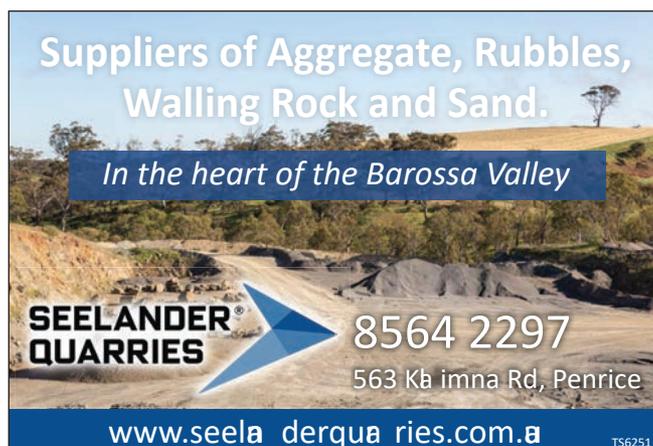
"To be honest, it's really hard to pick because every single person dominates when they are on the court – it's up to anyone, it just depends on how the season goes."

As reigning premiers, do you feel like you are the favourites this time around?

"It's a hard question, because I've heard a lot of clubs have had movement, so it's really hard to pick. We don't really know which clubs have the same teams or which have all new players, so I think it could be anyone's.

"We'd love to go back-to-back, I don't think that's ever been done with the Angaston Senior 1s. We broke the drought of I think 57 years last year, so winning another premierships is definitely our main focus this year."

Tilly Hadden



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Ebony Butler

Shannon Caire

President chat

with Jodie Grantham

What has been Barossa District's focus this pre-season?

"Barossa District Netball Club's focus this year is to foster our local talent. "We have some exciting young players returning back to the club this year, for a variety of reasons, and our focus will be to work with them to ensure that they most importantly enjoy their game and continue to grow on and off the court as valuable contributors to our club and broader community."

How different will this year's Senior 1 team look?

"Our Senior 1s this year are comprised of a complete group of new faces

who have been dedicated in the lead up to the season and are excited about playing in the Bulldogs dress.

"Our pre-season training commenced in January and as a collective all our senior and intermediate teams joined together for this.

"We have continued this collective approach, which has been extremely beneficial to date for all the players and officials. Already we are seeing far greater integration across all our player groups, seniors and juniors."

What will be the strength of this year's Bulldogs team?

"Our strength this year will be our unison across all our senior and junior teams as we come together as our netball family.

"There's an excitement for what the future holds, particularly in light of our pending relocation to the new Lyndoch Recreation Park precinct."



Zahlia Justice

Coach chat

with Zoe Adams

How did you end up taking over as Freeling's Senior 1 coach this season?

"Last year I was at Freeling and coached their Senior 2s and also the Inter 1s.

"The main thing I want to get out of Freeling this year and into the future is developing the whole club – skill and development from juniors all the way to seniors.

"I did my knee when I was 16, so got into the role of coaching then and have loved it every since.

"As far as my playing background goes, I represented the Eyre Peninsula with the academy that they used to do, and did some State Country Netball in 2014 and 2016, and after my knee I came to Adelaide and started my studies as a teacher and was playing at Tango.

"I was there for nine years playing Premier League and reserves, from 2013 until 2019, then my knee didn't allow me to play any sport any more.

"I came to Freeling in 2022 and played in the Senior 1s – unfortunately I did my calf muscle in the first game and haven't got that recovered and back to where it needs to be, so it's taken me away from the playing side of things and now gone into coaching."

How different will this year's Senior 1s look compared to last year?

"In terms of the team for this year, we've got Sarah Luke joining us – she's a very tall goalie, which is great to our attack end.

"She moved back to the community last year, but she's a nurse at the RAH so she needed to make sure her work commitments could fit her playing netball. She's got that sorted and will be playing most games for us which will be great.

"We have another new player joining the club this year – Kirsty Murname, a vet from Roseworthy – who is a very versatile player as well. I can't wait to see what she'll bring on the court, which is very exciting.

"We are running a Senior 1-2 squad, so looking at our Senior 2s, we've got a lot of inters coming up from last year. We've got some young players playing with some experienced players.

"During the season we have some players with planned holidays, but that's going to give those inter players the opportunity to show me what they can do and what Freeling is going to look like in the future.

"It's all positive for the club and I can't wait to see what 2024 and the future brings."

What would you say is your goal this season?

"We do have a great team and our goal this year is to make the top-four.

"When I see where we've been sitting over the last three or four years at that bottom end – I do really want to push teams this year and get into that top-four, that's my goal this year."

Do you expect any of the youngsters to make an impact in the 1s?

"They haven't had a lot of senior opportunity to be fair – a couple of them got some court time because we were short.

"Alyssa Markwick is a goalkeeper and will be playing in the Senior 2s, so that's excellent to see.

"We also have Krystal Havelka – she's a young player and we can't wait to see what this season brings for her. Hopefully we can get her into the Senior 1s as well.

"Georgia Haheisy is a mid-courter who will start in the 2s this year, and when we get to the 3s we have Emily Warner as a goalie.

"A lot of our Inters have gone into our 1s-to-4s teams, and when people are away I want to give opportunities to those girls against teams like South and those that have a lot of experience and can help girls develop."

What are the strengths of this team?

"This year we are going to focus a lot on defence. You need to have a strong defence to be able to win games.

"The way I see a netball game – you get the same amount of centre passes, so it's up to defence to get one intercept and you are up by one goal.

"Then just movement through the court – use of give-and-gos – opening up the court to be able to get it from one end to the other very quickly and score. Speed and defence will probably be the two things that we'll be focusing on."

How much does it help having reigning league Best-and-Fairest Meg Cocks

holding your defence together?

"Her experience and talk on the court is amazing, and her and Carly Scott are actually coaching our Senior 2s as well, so I think with all of us working together we definitely have a great future at Freeling.

"Meg's knowledge – she played State Country with me when we were younger – so the relationship we have and her experience is absolutely sensational.

"We have experience in all areas of the court this year which definitely helps, in Senior 1s and 2s."



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Coach chat

with Scott Waddington

Last year was your first season in charge of Gawler Central, how did it go?

"I'm from Gawler, and I've lived there most of my life.

My daughters played at Gawler Central, and now my granddaughter and grandsons play at the club, so it's like I've come full circle.

"It was a time to change from what I believe is a group of players who have done extremely well for a long period of time, and it was just getting to a point where I thought it needed to be freshened up a little bit.

"So what we did last year was take the opportunity to use quite a few new debutants, and I think six of the nine players I used were all under 20 years of age.

"So when you look at the rebuild – which I suppose some people called it – we did extremely well to have such a young group and still maintain such a good, healthy position on the ladder."

You've landed a couple of big recruits this off-season in Sonja Davey and Kelsey, how much of an impact do you think they will make?

"We identified last year that the goalie end was probably an area that we needed to look outside the club to address.

"We didn't really have established goalies that we felt were ready to compete at a very high level. We had two youngsters, one was 18 and the other was 20, who basically carried the workload last year.

"Both of those girls are still at the club, one of them has been selected in the Senior 1s again and the other will go back to the Senior 2s to get a bit more court time and experience.

"So Sonja and Kelsey both come into that group now with not only the anticipation of playing well for me, but also helping to develop these youngsters to eventually understand what it takes to compete week-in, week-out at a high level."

Other than those two additions, will there be any other big changes to the Senior 1 team?

"Our captain Ali Parsons is pregnant, and we just picked up a former Nuriootpa Senior 1 defender Brianna Falland.

"At the moment I've selected Brianna in the Senior 2s, and I've got Sharni Assender coming up from the 2s. Sharni was the best player in the 2s grand final last year, and won the Best-and-Fairest, so I'm rewarding her with a call-up.

"Brianna adds some more depth to that group, and no doubt she will get court time and play a part in the Senior 1s, and we'll just have to wait and see if Ali comes back from having a baby at some stage this season or if it will be the year after.

"Ali is undoubtedly one of the best players in the competition, but while we lost some talent down that end, we gained a bunch down the other end, so who knows how it will shake out.

"It could end up just keeping the status quo, but I am hoping we will improve.

Which returning players do you think will be key contributors?

"Erin Scheepens has made the Team of the Year for the past four years, and she will be back as the sole captain while Ali is out.

"Casey Black as well, another wing attack/centre, she's been around, she played in the last premiership team and is still only 27. She's obviously a huge contributor to our group.

"We've also got one of my daughters, Brittney Waddington, returning from pregnancy. She was out all of last season, but was a Senior 1s player prior to that.

"Then there's who I think was the unearthing of the season last year, Ebony Dekort. She was only 17 last year, and she played nine Senior 1 games.

"She had come from the city as a junior after not quite making their senior ranks out there, so she was a big plus for me. She was offered positions again this year in the city but turned them down, so I'm really excited about her staying on."

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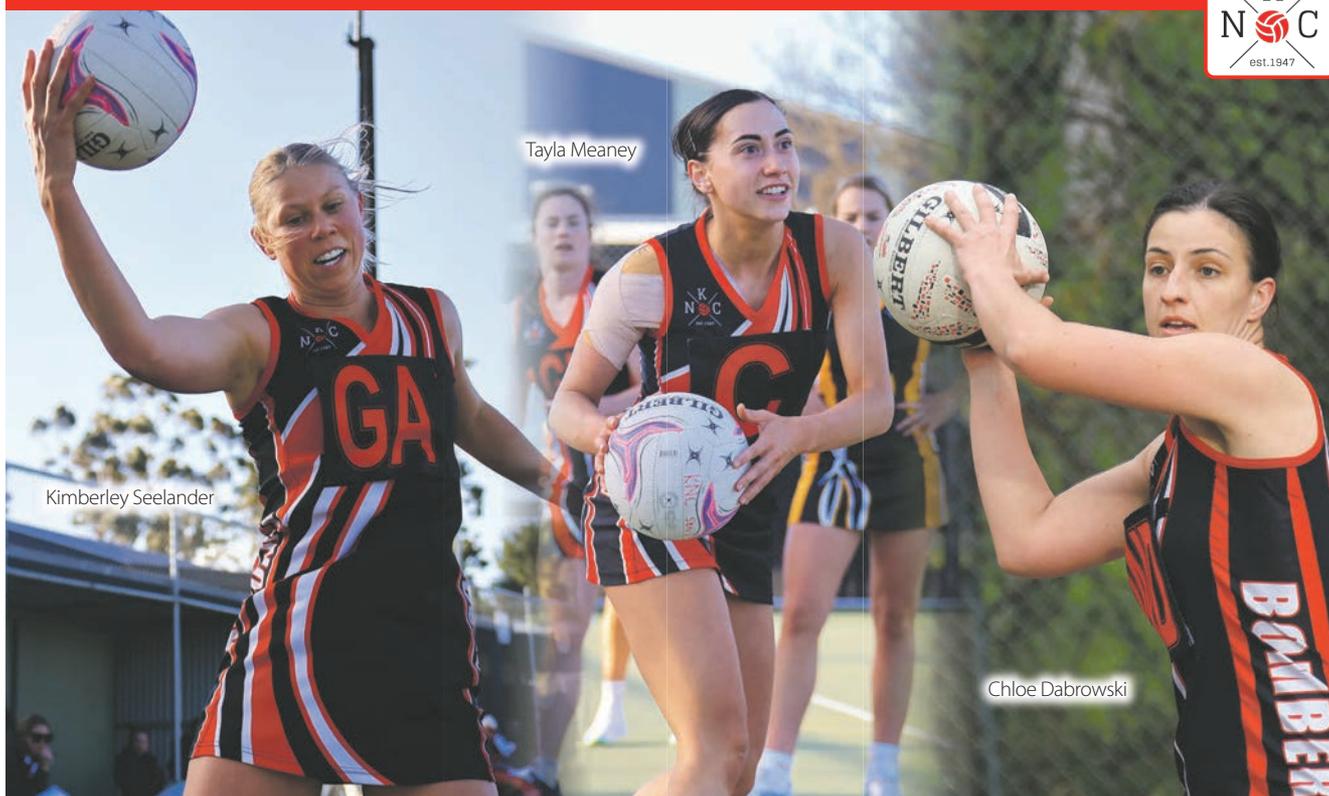
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L00367



Kira Buckskin



Kapunda heads into the 2024 Senior 1 netball season coming off back-to-back 5-11 campaigns in 2022 and 2023.

Boasting some of the best talent in the entire competition, including former league Best-and-Fairest Tayla Meaney, the Bombers' recent departure from the top four can perhaps be attributed to a lack of raw numbers and depth compared to some of the bigger clubs. But, help is on the way.

Over the past two seasons Kapunda has put

together an Inter 1 record of 28-4, and in early March five junior Bombers were selected for the Adelaide Thunderbirds Talent Academy.

Headlining that group is reigning Inter 1 Best-and-Fairest Charlotte Leslie, who earned one of the 19 spots in the coveted Emerging Talent Academy, while Alyssa Valentine, Layla Valentine, Tayla McCarthy and Grace Menzel were all accepted into the Jamestown Development Academy.

As well as that contingent, Halle Zivic was

still eligible for Inter grades in 2023 when she stepped up to Senior 2s, playing for the under 17s Country Championships representative team and earning the Lorraine Norman Junior Club Person of the Year.

The era that was defined by club legends Penny Chappell and Kimberley Seelander could be winding to a close – or could the next generation open up a new premiership window by creating the perfect balance of experience and youth?



Coach chat

with Sally Fromm

How long have you been involved with Nuriootpa netball and what made you put your and up for the Senior 1 role?

"I have been involved with Nuriootpa Netball Club since I was a junior. I applied for a coaching position within the club and I was successful in getting the role of Senior 1 coach.

"I have a fierce love for the game and creating a good culture. I am extremely excited to be working with an incredible bunch of players this season."

Nuri finished 5th in 2022, and 5th in 2023 – have you had any discussions about expectations for this season?

"We have had discussions on what we want to achieve this year.

"We want to put out a good quality brand of netball and work the best we can as a team always having each other's back on and off the court.

"We are going to be enjoying the moment and will be taking it game by game."

Who is the club's reigning best-and-fairest? And who are some players who could be in the mix this year?

"Tarnie Shinnick received a well-deserved Best-and-Fairest in 2023 and Team of the Year selection.

"She is one of the best defenders in the league and is looking to be in very good form in 2024.

"Every player in our Senior 1 team will be in the mix as I know they will give it their all

each game and work hard for each other."

Who are some of the club's brightest young talents?

"Junior development and all player development is important at Nuriootpa and the club is working on the right pathways that keep our juniors playing through all of our senior sides.

"This season Jade Poland has been successful in gaining selection in the Senior 1/2 squad at just 16 years of age, she attends SEDA College on a netball scholarship.

"She is a dynamic mid-courter and I definitely have my eye on her as one to watch.

"Another bright young talent in the Senior 1 team is Sophie Newcombe, she has gained selection after a couple of dominant seasons in Senior 2. I am looking forward to what she can put out on court this year.

"Other young talents to keep an eye on are Hannah Hahn and Charlotte Pink."

What do you think will be the strengths and areas for improvement with this year's side?

"The strengths of this year's side is the group's mental capacity, never giving in and dedication to the game and each other. We have just the right mix of experience and youth and have a lot of versatility within the group.

"Like with anything there will be ups and downs and things to work on. I'm hoping we have a high centre pass conversion rate and score from defensive gains, but this can always be improved.

"I encourage the team to give their all, enjoy the moment and the journey together."



Jade Poland



Ellie Clark

Ella Davey



Coach chat

with Rebecca Brading

Coming off a 14-2 record, minor premiership and grand final appearance, how different will this year's team look?

"We were very lucky to only lose the one player from last year's grand final team, which has allowed us to stay strong and consistent.

"With the addition of a few more players I believe we will have a very strong, well-rounded team for this year."

What are your expectations for this season?

"I have every confidence that the squad we have brought together for this year is strong enough to make finals again.

"I know a lot of teams have been recruiting, and I'm looking forward to there being a strong competition in the Senior 1s and being pushed every week.

"I think our team is ready for the challenge, and hungry to bounce back from the disappointing end to last season."

What has been the strength of this South side in recent seasons, and do you think it will be the same this time around?

"I think our strength has been in our versatility and ability to pull up from the Senior 2s. We have a good combination of youth and experience, which has helped us

maintain our success.

"I'm excited with this year's player group and the rule changes I think will certainly play to our strengths."

Who is the club's reigning Best-and-Fairest, and who do you expect to be contention this year?

"Nicolle Saunders took out our Best-and-Fairest last year, and I expect she will have another solid year.

"Honestly I think anyone in the team could contend for the award, everyone has their own strengths and roles in the team."

Who are some of the club's youngsters we should be keeping an eye on?

"Kassidy Ryan was still eligible to play in the under 17s last year and had a very solid season.

"With her first Senior 1 season under her belt I'm confident she will continue to improve and have another standout year. Her pace and accuracy in goals is a massive strength for the team."

Where does this team need to improve between now and September?

"Our main focus in the lead up to September is to continue to build on our existing connections and gel the new players into the team.

"Everyone is already working so well together that I only really think we need to do some fine-tuning to hopefully have another great year."



Kassidy Ryan

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Coach chat

with Karla Gogoll and Loren Fowler

What has been your focus during your first pre-season in charge?

"Karla is an exercise physiologist, so our main focus for pre-season was to better prepare players' bodies for the demands of game play and ultimately reduce injury risk.

"We know knees and ankles are the most commonly injured body parts in netball, of which the majority occur when landing.

"Although we only had a short pre-season I placed a strong focus on lower limb strength, stability and landing control.

"We will continue to have a focus on these elements throughout

the season and all teams in the club will continue incorporating aspects of Netball Australia's Knee Program in every warm up."

What do you think were the reasons for Tanunda's 1-15 finish in 2023?

"Unfortunately last season we didn't have a good run with injuries early on, which meant our Senior 1 team was regularly having to pull players up from Senior 2s.

"This year we are heading into the season with a larger Senior 1/2 squad, including new faces to the club, and we will have a strong focus on developing our players."

Who do you expect to be contending for the club's Best-and-Fairest?

"Last year our Best-and-Fairest was our goal attack Lily Durnford. However, we do have some strong defenders in the mix this season, so I wouldn't be surprised if we see a defender take

it out this year."

Are there any exciting youngsters at the club that we should keep our eyes on?

"Our Inters for 2024 are a talented bunch and will certainly be players to watch out for over the next couple of years.

"Inter 1 Lara Manning played one Senior 1 game last year, and we'll likely see her gain some experience in seniors again this year, along with Matilda Laidlaw."

Regardless of ladder position, what would you consider a successful season?

"There are three things I hope for from the team this season to build a strong foundation for success: determination, unity, and growth.

"Regardless of ladder position, a successful season will include seeing growth and development of each individual player on and off the court, while of course having some fun along the way."



Coach chat

with Steve O'Brien

What is your coaching background, and how did you end up at Willaston this year?

"This is my first year at Willaston. I have coached juniors and sub-juniors at Central Districts Harlequins, then moved on to Tango A grade, and then did some development roles in the junior grades.

"I received a phone call from one of the players, Rachael Mitchell, knowing that I've had a background in the AMD City level. So she reached out to me, and then the president and vice-president, Kiara Rawlinson and Krystal Rogers, followed up the phone call from Rachael.

"I hadn't coached Rachael before, but I watched the last game of the season between Willaston and Gawler Central, I was sitting there, I know the Senior 1 coach, and met her for the first time then, and she followed up to ask me if I wanted to coach."

How different will this year's team look compared to last? Any big ins to report?

"On the goalie front it will be a lot different, with some real accurate shooters, and we have lost our two ring defenders from last year. Amber Schultz, Alex Walker and Stacy Faehrmann are three of our big recruits this year. Rachael chased Alex, Amber is word of mouth when she knew I was out at Willaston, and Stacey has moved into the local area.

"We've also picked up Jamie Lee Bink from New Zealand. She'll definitely be in the 1s and can play centre, wing defence and ring defender as well."

In your first year for the club, what would you consider a successful season?

"Yeah, I really want to make the top-four, and if I can get improvement from each individual girl then that's a win for me."

What has been your primary focus in your first pre-season?

"Ball skills, running the right angles, and zones – they've never been taught zones. I'm teaching them how to do a zone – box zones, the wall and just introduced a diamond as well.

"Defensively we are going to be strong in that division, so we are doing a lot of work with that, twice a week."

What do you think will be the strengths of this team?

"Attack will be. Previously goalies have let them down a little bit, everyone at the club knows that, so hopefully we can bring some accuracy, around the 85-95 per cent accuracy.

"That's my biggest aim – to work on their technique with shooting. Even with the other girls that have been with the club for a while, I'm helping to change their technique.

"It's been a good preseason so far. I've brought up some girls that played in Senior 3s last year and given them an opportunity to play in the 1s this year. So it's going to be a challenge for me as well as for them."

Of the players who were already at Willaston when you arrived, who has caught your eye?

"There's three girls that are real pocket rockets – Tayla Cuy, Jasmine Gower and Caitlyn Muhs – I'm going to let them play their natural game, which is their speed, and bring the ball out of defence as well.

"I'll let them play to their strengths, I'm looking forward to the challenge of that as well."



Caitlin Muhs



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ROUND 1 *Apr 20*

Two Wells v Mallala
 HW Eagles v Hamley Bridge
 Virginia v United
 Angle Vale v Balaklava

ROUND 2 *Apr 27*

APRIL 25 United v Mallala (2.45pm)

Balaklava v HW Eagles
 Hamley Bridge v Two Wells
 Virginia v Angle Vale

**ANZAC
 ROUND**

ROUND 3 *May 4*

Balaklava v Two Wells
 HW Eagles v United
 Mallala v Angle Vale
 Hamley Bridge v Virginia

ROUND 4 *May 11*

HW Eagles v Mallala
 Two Wells v Virginia
 United v Balaklava
 Angle Vale v Hamley Bridge

ROUND 5 *May 18*

Balaklava v Mallala
 Angle Vale v Two Wells
 United v Hamley Bridge
 Virginia v HW Eagles

ROUND 6 *May 25*

Mallala v Virginia
 Two Wells v United
 HW Eagles v Angle Vale
 Balaklava v Hamley Bridge

ROUND 7 *Jun 1*

Two Wells v HW Eagles
 Hamley Bridge v Mallala
 Virginia v Balaklava
 Angle Vale v United

JUNE LONG WEEKEND *June 8*

ROUND 8 *Jun 15*

United v Virginia
 Balaklava v Angle Vale
 Mallala v Two Wells
 Hamley Bridge v HW Eagles

ROUND 9 *Jun 22*

Two Wells v Hamley Bridge
 Mallala v United
 Angle Vale v Virginia
 HW Eagles v Balaklava

ROUND 10 *Jun 29*

Two Wells v Balaklava
 Virginia v Hamley Bridge
 Angle Vale v Mallala
 United v HW Eagles

ROUND 11 *Jul 6*

Virginia v Two Wells
 Hamley Bridge v Angle Vale
 Balaklava v United
 Mallala v HW Eagles

COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS *July 13-14 – Victor Harbor*

ROUND 12 *Jul 20*

Mallala v Balaklava
 Hamley Bridge v United
 Two Wells v Angle Vale
 HW Eagles v Virginia

ROUND 13 *Jul 27*

Virginia v Mallala
 Hamley Bridge v Balaklava
 Angle Vale v HW Eagles
 United v Two Wells

ROUND 14 *Aug 3*

HW Eagles v Two Wells
 United v Angle Vale
 Mallala v Hamley Bridge
 Balaklava v Virginia

ROUND 15 *Aug 10*

Two Wells v Mallala
 HW Eagles v Hamley Bridge
 Virginia v United
 Balaklava v Angle Vale

ROUND 16 *Aug 17*

Angle Vale v Two Wells
 United v HW Eagles
 Hamley Bridge v Virginia
 Mallala v Balaklava

1ST SEMI FINAL *August 24 - TBD*

2ND SEMI FINAL *August 31 - TBD*

PRELIMINARY FINAL *September 7 - TBD*

GRAND FINAL *September 14 - TBD*



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APFL's reigning A grade premiers Two Wells

Roosters carry 23-game winning streak into 2024

ON a run of three consecutive premierships, and only one missed grand final since 2017, Two Wells will head into 2024 having not tasted defeat in the APFL since July 30, 2022.

Since that loss against Angle Vale in Round 13 of the 2022, the Roosters have responded with 23 victories on the trot, and they will bring in an almost unchanged playing list once again.

Despite that powerful position, Two Wells' star player/coach Caleb Edmead is pointing at Angle Vale as this year's team to beat after the Owls secured

the services of former Barossa District superstar Leigh Ryswyk and former Gawler Central premiership player Andrew Wright.

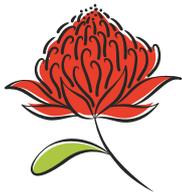
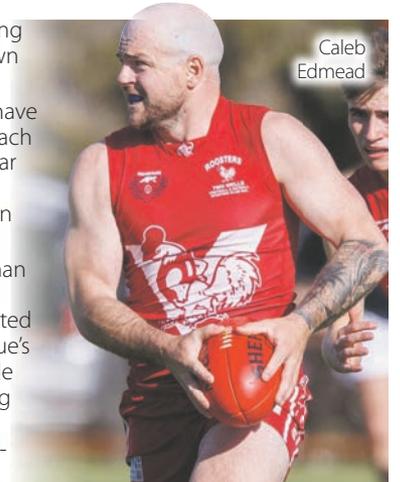
The Owls departed in disappointing fashion in the most recent finals, bombing out in straight sets, so there will be plenty to prove as they and reigning grand finalists Mallala likely battle it out for second spot.

Hummocks-Watchman and Balaklava both have finals on their minds, and new Hamley Bridge coach Brett Burgess thinks his side is right on the

brink as well, creating a strong chasing pack breathing down Mallala's neck.

Wooden-spooners Virginia have nowhere to go but up in coach Wayne Knowles's second year of the rebuild, while United will be determined to remain in the mid-table at worst.

Hummocks-Watchman's Ethan Kwaterski may have turned some heads when the talented Eagle swooped on the league's Best-and-Fairest from outside of the finals spots, illustrating just how much quality is present throughout the star-studded APFL.



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Jake Edwards



Lachlan Mitchell

Coach chat with Ash Barnett

Coming off back-to-back top-three finishes, what are your expectations for this season?

"Playing finals. We expect to play finals. Two Wells is still the benchmark, no ifs or buts about that, and we're in that group of three or four chasing right behind them."

Have you landed any big recruits?

"We've picked up a few players, and lost a couple as well. Obviously Leigh Ryswyk has come across from Barossa District, he might be in his twilight years, but his experience will be fantastic for us."

"I was assistant coach at Barossa District for four years when Leigh was playing there. I've known him for a while – I was involved with getting him out to Barossa – and yeah, he just wanted a change after the last couple of years and

has decided to come across as an assistant coach as well.

"We probably lacked a little bit of leadership, and that's why we've recruited him and another experienced player."

"We also picked up a guy named Andrew Wright, he's come from Port Pirie, but he was at Gawler Central around six or seven years ago. I've known 'Wrighty' for quite a while, I coached him at zone level, and he's played State Country in 2019 and 2021."

"He's moved back to Adelaide, close to Angle Vale, so that was a very easy fit for Wrighty to come and play with us, and he'll probably run through the midfield."

"We targeted a couple of experienced players because our list is still pretty young. Everyone talks about other clubs, but I think in our best-20 we probably have 12 or 13 guys under the age of 23."

Who do you expect to be in Best-and-Fairest contention?

"That's hard to say to be honest,

it could easily be any of 10 or 12 players. The midfielders will always get a fair few votes."

"Lachlan Mitchell won it last year, and he's back again. He's Angle Vale through-and-through, I think he's won two of our past four Best-and-Fairests."

"The experienced lads coming in I assume will be around the mark, and we've got some youngsters now who have got those 40 or 50 games under their belts now – blokes like Jake Edwards and Xander Bates."

"They're the sort of guys we're expecting to take it to the next level this year, and we've got some really good kids down at Central District at the moment – Shaquan Davey, Conna Mackay, and we're hoping they play a bit of A grade footy for us as well."

"Shaquan and Conna are only 16 and 18, Edwards and Bates are 21 now and are ready to go – we're in a good spot."

Do you have any graduating juniors who are in A grade

consideration for Round 1?

"The main one so far has been Jesse Burns, he's had a really good pre-season and has done everything right. He's definitely one who has earned a start in the trial games in the A grade."

"A lot of kids coming out of under 17s are all midfielders, but I think at the senior level he's going to fit in as maybe a winger or a half-forward."

What will be the strength of this year's Owls side?

"I think the strength from these guys is the fact that we've played together for a bit. At this stage it looks like we've lost Beau Shinnick, he's going to play for Penola, but realistically most of these remaining guys have played at least 40 or 50 games together now."

"I think that continuity is a key for us, we haven't lost any of the other guys, nobody is retiring, and the experienced players we've got coming in should hit the ground running."

Coach chat

with Hayden Battle

Coming off a fourth-placed finish in 2023 and a first-round exit in the finals, what would you consider a successful season this time around?

"In 2024, like every team we want and expect to play in finals, and we will be doing everything we can to ensure that our squad is well placed to achieve this.

"Another area of equal focus for us is on developing our upcoming local talent within our footy club.

"For the last five-10 years we have been really lucky as a club to have players like Lachy Michael, Chad Ruiz, Tommy Chapman and Mitch Daniel to name a few all running through our midfield.

"Now we have an exciting group of lads that are all around that 18-23 age bracket that are looking for opportunities to take on more of the workload. With this in mind it's critical that we continue to develop and provide opportunities for these lads that are going to carry this club forward for the next 10 years."

Have you had any big ins or outs to report this off-season?

"Overall our squad is similar to last year, we have lost Corey Waters due to work commitments, Dylan McPeak has retired and Josh Harkness and Ben Heaslip have both gone out to Hummocks Watchman Eagles. "But other than that our recruits from last season are all returning, and we have managed to grab a few extra recruits with Jarrad Miller, Matty Gould and Lachy Whittaker joining us for the coming season.

"We are also fortunate that that we have got some good locals back to the club and it's great to see – guys like Ethan Brownlie, Will Dixon, Brady Krieg and Harrison Veitch back at the club training the house down."

Who do you expect to be in the running for Best-and-Fairest this year?

"Given we are going to be playing players in different roles to what they are used to, and we are going to be providing some of the upcoming lads with new opportunities, it will really be up to those that take it with both hands.

"We have a great spread of experience, strength, and youth and I'm keen to see how they all progress."

Have any of the younger fellas caught your eye this pre-season?

"Jack Pike and Riley Hannaford have both been training the house down and I expect that they will be given an opportunity at some stage, which is exciting for these lads and their families."

What do you anticipate being your side's strengths, and where can you improve?

"One of our biggest strengths will be the development of our younger players. We have a great group of lads in the 18-23 bracket who have all now played 20-50 A grade games and are all in that window raring to go, so I'm excited to see what they can produce.

"The main area of focus is to develop our playing group so that they become more resilient and so that they play a stronger, team-first brand of footy.

"I think if we can do that we will be around the mark and that is all we can ask of them."



Jacob Battle



Shane Moss



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Coach chat

with Jarrod Wilson

Two years in a row the Eagles have barely missed finals with an 8-8 record – what are your expectations this season?

"We spoke about it as a team at the start of the pre-season and our aim is not just to get into finals, but hopefully win some finals.

"We've realised that this year we need to get fitter as a group, as well as tighten up our skills, so we've been working hard on our execution and our fitness over the summer.

"I feel like if we can show real improvement in those areas then we can get back up to speed with Two Wells – who have obviously been a great team for the past three years, even longer really.

"Mallala have been really consistent, Balaklava have played in two or three grand finals, Angle Vale have a good team as well, so we know what we have to improve to get in the mix and hopefully we can do that this year."

Do you have any big ins or outs to report?

"No real big outs, which is good, and our focus in recruiting has been on bringing back some local lads.

"One really big one is Tait Nottle, who went to Blyth-Snowtown for a year. His partner played at Blyth in the netball, but he's come back, and he's a fantastic footballer.

"Jordan Bailey is another, he had a couple of years off with a knee injury but is good to go again, and these guys all played for us in the 2019 premiership.

"Josh Appleby is the same – he was the captain for the 2019 premiership because the actual captain was injured on the day – and Josh Kelly has come back from Min-Man after a year.

"They're mostly in that age bracket we were looking for – around 26 – because we felt like experience was another area that we needed to add to our group. We've

got a lot of good, young footballers, but we need to put some experience around them.

"The other two really good ones are Josh Harkness, who was a ruckman at Balaklava, and Ben Heaslip from Balaklava as well. They've been strong additions to our group.

"The only real big out for us was Angus Aldenhoven, who has retired from footy. He came across for a year and was a really good lad, but he's really our only big A grade out I suppose.

"Most of those recruits will suit up for the As in Round 1, but we've really made a point of adding depth in general to the squad, because our B grade last year really struggled for numbers.

"It's about making our whole playing squad stronger – we talk a lot about just being a footy group, not separated into A and B grades – and I think we've made good progress this pre-season."

Who do you anticipate being in the Best-and-Fairest mix?

"I think definitely Tait Nottle, he's a fantastic footballer who plays through the midfield and can go forward and kick some goals. A real goal-kicking midfielder – very handy to get one of those.

"Mitch Jude as well, he's been with us a couple of years and he's really started to mature now as a sort of half-forward/on-baller.

"James Daly has been runner-up before, obviously Ethan Kwaterski won the Mail Medal. They're some of the guys who are driving our engine room."

Have any youngsters been able to force their way into the As?

"Dylan Williams is one, he's the president's son and he played three games in the As last year as an under 17. He's come into the A grade squad now, been training well and will probably play half-forward for us.

"We picked up some young kids last year who are coming into their second seasons and really finding

their feet – Archie Yelland, Brodie Hocking, and I really like Cody Redpath.

"Cody came through the junior system and is in his fourth year of A grade now, he's had a really good pre-season and is one to keep an eye on."

What do you think will be the strengths and weaknesses of this group?

"We're not necessarily big like your Two Wells or Angle Vale, who have these big guys they kick down the line to, so I think we're hoping to be a fast ball-movement team.

"We've been working really hard on being more defensively sound when we don't have the footy to try and slow teams down, but I'm hoping our attacking style of footy won't change.

"Over the summer we've been working on a fair bit of overlap run and trying to carry the footy with leg speed. Especially when we get on the big ovals we're hopeful that will help us pick teams apart a little bit.

"We're fully understanding that we're going to be coming up against some very good opposition just about every week really. There's the benchmark in Two Wells, Angle Vale, Mallala and Balaklava, but we've got to try and beat these teams consistently to get back into finals contention.

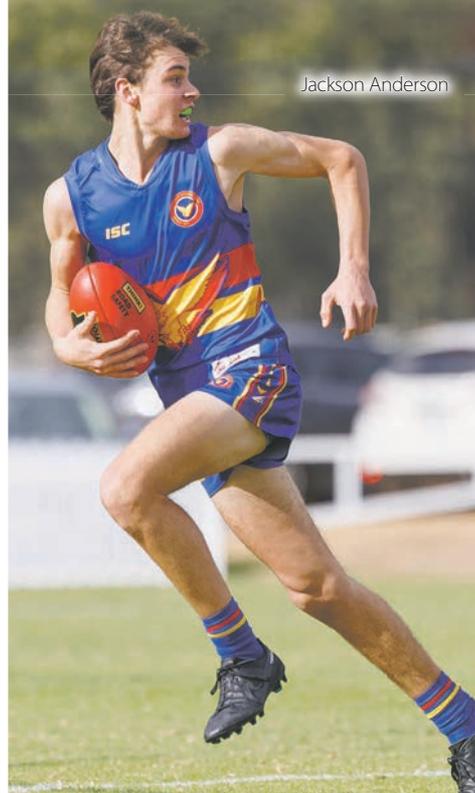
"Definitely defensively, and accountability I suppose comes along with that. At the back-end of last year we won our last five games, so I think consistency will be a real key, we want to be performing week-in and week-out, which is hard with a young group.

"But we feel with some added experience they can help those younger lads not be up and down as much, and that will hopefully help us win another two or three games to get us into finals.

"Consistency is something we're really striving for this year, to be a really competitive footy team every week and win some games of footy on the back of that."



Dylan Williams



Jackson Anderson



Coach chat

with Liam Whitwell

Do you have any big ins or outs to report from last year's grand final side?

"Harry Slee has come to us from RSMU, Will Paynter has come back after a year off, and Jeremy Cross has come to us from the army or navy."

"Angus Bruggemann is going to play again. We haven't really got any kids coming up, and Brad Wilson might be having a year off, so that might be one big loss."

"Apart from that we have the same cohort as last year."

Where will your new faces fit into the side?

"Harry Slee and Will Paynter will probably play off half-back and through the middle. Angus will play up forward, and Jeremy Cross I'm not quite sure, but probably half-forward as well."

Who is the club's reigning Best-and-Fairest, and who do you think will be in the mix this year?

Kale Olds is Best-and-Fairest – he plays in the ruck. He played really good footy last year and I expect he'll be around the mark again this year."

"Developing players in Jack May and Charlie Baker will be around the mark, and then obviously Will Paynter and Harry Slee will be strong for us."

"Sam Angus came runner-up last year and I can't see him dropping off either."

What do you expect this team to do well?

"We are a young list that doesn't give in and we've got a fair bit of ticker. We are going to be a bit quicker than last year, and a unit that has belief and doesn't give in."

To become the side you want to

be by September, what do you need to improve on?

"It's definitely decision-making under pressure. Skills and decision-making under pressure, and as much as we try to train that in preseason, it takes games, and it takes the stakes to do that better."

With no graduating under 18s jumping into the As, who are the young guys who can take the next step?

"We've been pretty blessed with young fellas last year – first-year players were Jack May and Charlie Baker. We've got a really young list. Jack Heaslip will take another step I think. We've also got a couple of colts that have another year in the 18s, so we might get a few games into them as well."



Kale Olds



Angus Judd

Coach chat

with Brett Burgess

How did you end up leading Hamley Bridge this year?

"My brother Ben Burgess coached Hamley 18 years ago, and I went there as a 21-year-old recruit, made some lifelong friends at the football club and fell in love with the club itself."

"I came back to the club four years ago to help a good mate of mine Matt Norman out and be his assistant coach in the A grade."

"He was pivotal in turning the club around in two years from a team that was getting beaten by 20 goals each week to bringing back a competitive spirit within the group."

"We needed to add something else at the end of 2021 so 'Normy' head-hunted Todd Miles – a past Hamley junior with a very impressive football CV – to come back and coach the club."

"He has done the past two years with myself as his assistant, but this year has taken a role down at the Glenelg Football club to coach their league midfield, so I have accepted the head coach role, which I'm super excited about."

"We do keep Todd as a player, which is a great positive for the club."

What do you think will be the strengths of this Bombers playing group?

"Our strength is our youth, we are a very young team that has a lot of pace and these guys are now coming into their prime years of football."

"It's up to me and the other coaches to show these guys exactly what they're capable of, because I'm not sure if all of them are fully aware of the levels they can get to."

Who do you expect to be in the Best-and-Fairest conversation?

"Angus Judd was our Best-and-

Fairest last year, he is a fantastic footballer, but also a pleasure to coach – such a great fella."

"He can still go to another level I feel, he's now had a couple years of representative football and I think this year he could give the league's Best-and-Fairest a shake. He is such a talent."

"Others that have impressed me on the track and will have big years are Josh Bayliss, Luke Taylor and the McCabe brothers – Ed and Henry."

"I could list quite a few more but I'll keep it to these blokes for now."

Have you had any juniors force their way into A grade consideration?

"We have had a few juniors get an opportunity at A grade level already last year, so really looking forward to seeing how a few of these boys progress."

"Corbin Branson, Campbell Simpson and Cooper Muldoon are under 16s still this year, but all three could quite possibly push to play A grade once again."

"Will Morris comes up to senior football this year as well – I rate him highly and I think he also will get an opportunity to play in our A grade throughout the season."

What are your expectations for your first season in charge?

"The expectation is to continue to build this very young group. I honestly think we are ready to start talking the 'F' word (finals), but we will only be capable of achieving this if I get the buy-in from the whole squad."

"The early signs have been terrific. As long as we continue on the path we have created for ourselves over the past four seasons then I have no doubt this season will be a success in our eyes."



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Coach chat

with Caleb Edmead

Having gone all of 2023 without a defeat, has your playing list changed over the off season?

"We've had one retirement, Bryce Hart, but apart from that everyone else has recommitted. It's pretty good having the same list going into the next season."

What do you think was so special about last year's team and why were you such a force?

"I don't really know, honestly. The year before we ran the gauntlet and played a lot of young blokes, so instead of them only having five-to-10 games under their belts, last year they were in the 20-to-30 game range."

"So consistency from the young blokes carried us through, I suppose. What I put it down to is that we had blokes stand up in games that we needed them to, it wasn't just relying on the old heads, which was a pleasing thing from my perspective."

What are your expectations going into this year?

"I don't really set too much future

goals, I just look week-by-week, but I think probably downplaying ourselves a bit, I think we're not the team to beat this year."

"Angle Vale have recruited well, so by looking on paper they are the team to beat. Obviously we've got targets on our backs for being undefeated, but I think on paper Angle Vale are the team to beat."

"They recruited a couple of old heads – Leigh Ryswyk is one of them. He's played umpteen games for North Adelaide, can play footy and is a good leader."

"He really demands the footy up forward, and that's what they've probably been lacking. So I really think they'll strive forward and go to the next level."

Who do you expect to be contending for the club's Best-and-Fairest?

"Luke Barnett is reigning Best-and-Fairest and no doubting he'll be in the mix again."

"We've got enough that sort of spread the load, I don't really rely on blokes to have outstanding games, I just want people to play the team role."

Where do you feel the team needs to improve between now and September?

"Forward entries is probably the one thing I'm pretty critical on. We've got most of the other facets of the game down pat, I just think we can move the footy better going inside 50."

"If we can clear that up we can score more heavily. I like to score, the more goals you kick, the better it is, obviously. I'd like to score 100 points a game, that's the goal!"

When the Roosters are playing their best footy, what does it look like visually to you?

"Ball control – I think when we are playing our best footy we control the footy, control the game, we have up to 100-plus marks for the day. That's when we are playing on top, and we really find some space when we do that."

"I'm really a big one on ball control – I don't like to give the footy back – so the more that we can control the footy it means the other teams have to run, which is perfect for us, so on turnover they can't counter-attack."

"It means that on turnover for us we've got the energy to go back and defend as well, because it's obviously a lot easier running when you've got the footy than it is when you don't. That's the way I look at footy."



Aaron Dart



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Player chat

with Josh Hart

How different will this year's United team look compared to last season? Any big ins or outs?

"We were able to retain majority of the new players we added last year except for a couple who have moved on. It was really important for us to build some consistency in our playing list as United have experienced some pretty major turnover the last few years.

"We were able to add a full forward, which was something we lacked last year, and will allow some of the other forwards to play their more natural roles.

"We were also able to pick up some more players to rotate through the midfield which, will hopefully help us add a new dimension on the inside this season as well."

Jumping from zero wins in 2022 up to five in 2023, what would you say your expectations are for this year?

"Our goal is to keep improving and building on from last year. With a season under our belt as a pretty much entirely new group, hopefully we are more familiar with each other and can turn some of the 20-point losses we had last year into wins.

"If we do that we think we can challenge some of the sides above us and push to

be in the top four."

Who are some of United's Best-and-Fairest hopefuls?

"Jarred Allmond is the reigning Best-and-Fairest and Angus Rowntree was runner-up.

"Obviously they will be hard to top this year but we will be looking for some of our younger guys like Tyler Sobey, Jack McCardle, Joseph Hitch, Bailey Jones, Austin Perris and myself to go up another level and support Jarred and Angus this season.

"Heath Pym and Josh Weatherly have had strong pre-seasons after dealing with some injuries last year and will be important for us as well, so I wouldn't be surprised to see them up there.

"Ross Sharer our captain polled well last year and is more motivated than ever to lead our group to finals this year."

What do you think will be the strengths of this year's team? And where do you need to improve throughout the season?

"It was evident from the first night of pre-season that a lot of the group came back in great condition, and being a young side, our fitness is something we will look to use to our advantage throughout the season.

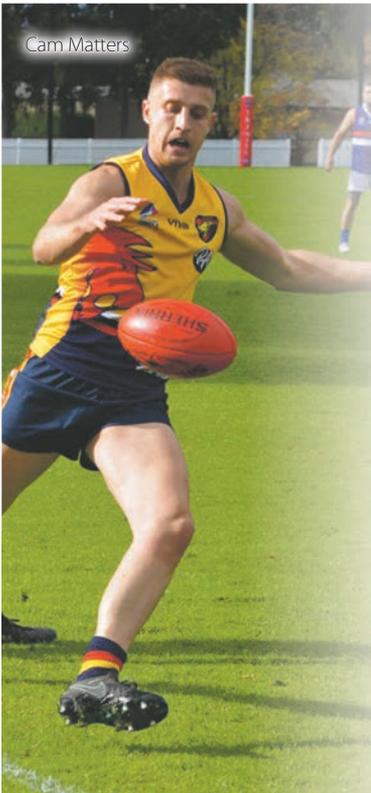
"Jarred prides himself on his skill and disposal so we have had an emphasis on really valuing our disposal as a team and not turning the footy over, which is an area we thought let us down at times last season."



James Booth-Elliott



New head coach to lead Trinity in 2024



Cam Matters

IN their first season back in Division 5 of the Adelaide Footy League since 2019 last year, Trinity Old Scholars Football Club showed they belong, making it straight into finals.

The TOSers headed into last season on the back of an incredibly dominant 2022 season, with both the A and B grade teams going undefeated en route to a grand final victory. Last year, the As finished fourth after the regular season and made it to the second week of finals before being knocked out by eventual premiers Kilburn.

However, after losing more than half of last season's A grade playing group, the challenge will be on to improve on the 2023 effort under new leadership.

"It'll be important to remain in games for as long as possible through hunger and endeavour to give ourselves the best opportunity to run over the top at the end of games and take some results," club president Nathaniel Eldridge said.

After seven years at the helm of the A grade side, which included two premierships, Stephen Couzner has stepped down from the role with Cam Matters taking over as player-coach.

Eldridge said Matters has brought a good structure to preseason training.

"The playing group has found purpose for all drills," he said.

"He will bring a new dimension as player-coach and the club feels Cam is the best man to lead our playing group forward." Eldridge said the club has enjoyed a strong preseason to date.

"Consistently getting 30-plus players out on the track each training has put us in a strong position physiologically as a group," he said.

"We are a young, fit group that will capitalise on any team that doesn't have running power, particularly on our home deck."

There are a couple of new recruits that will help the TOSers in 2024, including young player

Beau Dmello who has moved down from the Northern Territory having played for the Palmerston Football Club.

"[He's] extremely silky with ball in hand and can damage opposition by both hand and foot," Eldridge said.

2023 joint best and fairest Cameron Hankinson will once again be key to Trinity's hopes, while Eldridge pointed out another youngster in Bailey Puvogel who has plenty of talent.

Despite a lack of preseason last year, Puvogel still finished among the best players in seven matches, and Eldridge said he is looking set for a big season.

"[He had] no real preseason last year due to working away, however this year he has put together a good training block," he said.

"Look for him to improve in an increased role this season."

Trinity's season kicks off with a round one match against Mitcham on April 13.

Coach chat

with Wayne Knowles

After going 1-15 in 2023, how can Virginia improve this season?

"We've had to have a bit of a clean-out, it takes you 12 months to understand where you're at as a club, and for me, being away from the competition for so long, to get my head around where everyone was at.

"We identified certain things that we needed to do and needed to change, both on and off-field, which was a pretty big job over the summer.

"We needed to be a little bit more professional in what we did, we've brought in a football manager now, we recently had the SANFL out to do a coaching presentation for all our coaches.

"We've set up real coaching structures through the grades, with some senior players now assisting the juniors and making more of a connection there.

"It's been more about the development of our support staff as well, because what we ultimately want is to build a stronger club."

Have you had many changes to your playing list?

"We've recruited a fair few players, but I'd say Daniel Kaipara from Modbury, he's probably the biggest in for us. Danny spent some time with the Crows in the SANFL, and he'll play up forward.

"We've also brought in Matthew Stewart from Kilburn, Jake Egel from Eudunda Roberstown – both midfielders – Jack Murphy from SMOSH West Lakes has come in, and our old ruckman Hayden Ingram is back from Wallaroo.

"Last year we had to use 66 players in our B grade, we were pulling blokes off the farm who hadn't played for 15 years, so we've made a real effort to strengthen our overall depth.

"Most nights this pre-season we've been getting 35-40 on the track – compared to this time last year where we were getting 15 or 16."

Who are some of the brightest young talents at the club?

"Coming through from the under 17s we obviously have Connor Clery, he won the APFL under 17s medal last year. He's been training well, he's down at Central District at the moment.

"Levi Hite is another who has come through the 17s last year,

I like how he moves so he'll probably play a bit of A grade footy. He's more of an outside player, I can see him on a wing or maybe a pressure forward."

Who do you think will be in the running for Best-and-Fairest?

"Last year's Best-and-Fairest Chris Foura will be around the mark again this year, he's a key defender, and the likes of Egel, Stewart and Kaipara are all class."

What do you think will be the strength of this side?

"We'll play an exciting game style, which we will be fit enough to do this year. We weren't fit enough last year, so you'll see a lot fitter Virginia.

"We've brought in some blokes who have real skills. Last year I might've come in with a game plan that, if we're being realistic, was a little bit hard for them to execute.

"We've got the people around now who can execute an exciting game plan, so we're excited to test ourselves.

"Our fitness and our skills have been the big focuses this pre-season, and that will be something we hope to continue to improve on throughout the year."



Kaden Baxter



Connor Clery

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New-look for GDNA in 2024

THE upcoming winter season will look a little different for the Gawler and Districts Netball Association (GDNA) with the development of the new courts under way.

GDNA president Kylie Forby said it was an exciting time for netball, but it would be some time before games were back to their traditional home on Hallam Drive.

"The redevelopment of our courts at Hallam Drive will see a location change to utilise the courts of Riverbanks College B-12 at Angle Vale each Saturday," Ms Forby said.

"There will be no entrance fees and participant fees have also been reduced."

Despite the venue change, it was full steam ahead for the netball season.

With plenty of clubs hitting the courts for training and still building their squads, Ms Forby said it was hard to make any predictions for the season.

"Clubs are yet to provide all registrations to the Association and continue to build their teams presently – there are still opportunities for people to join clubs and we encourage them to make contact," she said.

"Likely front runners are difficult to assess at this stage but all clubs are keen to still be on the court come finals so we expect there



Sandy Creek's Senior 1 Premiers

to be high levels of competition and robust rivalry."

While it is certainly hard to say how each team will perform this season, Sandy Creek Blue will look to once again defend its title on the court in the Senior 1s.

Sandy Creek Blue went through the 2023 winter season undefeated and will likely be

the team to beat this year.

In the Senior 2s, both Sandy Creek teams got right to the pointy end of the season in a much tighter competition, but it was Green that had the edge over Teal in the final.

The club will likely hope to see both Senior 2 teams perform just as strongly this season.

Bombers look to pick up where they left off



HAMLEY Bridge will head into the Adelaide Plains Netball Association's 2024 season as the reigning A1 premier for the first time in a decade after a barnstorming finish to the campaign.

After starting 2023 with only one win from the first four games, the Bombers showed terrific resilience and growth to completely turn their season around, winning six of their last seven.

The Peckers from Balaklava may have felt they were the best overall team, finishing with a 13-1 record in the home-and-away season, but that one loss was also delivered by Hamley Bridge.

Those two sides are expected to pick up where they left off as the class of the competition, although fellow top-four outfits Mallala (8-6) and Angle Vale (7-7) are both capable of making a jump into the top-two. Despite not qualifying for the postseason, Hummocks (6-7) showed it can clearly hang with the league's top dogs after only going down 44-43 against league-leaders Balaklava late in the season.

Two Wells and Virginia have plenty of work to do to re-join what is a competitive top-five in a seven-team league.

After the departure of 2021 and 2022 APNA Best-and-Fairest Meg Geddes from



APNA A1 premiers Hamley Bridge

Hummocks, Angle Vale's Lee Barnett and Hamley Bridge's Bailey Galbraith shared the league's top individual honour in 2023. With Barnett now stepping up to the plate as

Angle Vale's player/coach, and Galbraith only suiting up for seven regular season games in 2023, that pair will deservedly be at the top of the awards watch-list this time around.

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Due to the court redevelopment games will be played at Riverbanks College B-12 Angle Vale

Club, team, & individual registrations welcome

Dogs off the leash in 2024

FOLLOWING a plucky 2023 season that saw Paul Thomas's side bow out in the semi-final, Central District is poised to improve yet again in the upcoming SANFL campaign. The Doggies finished the minor rounds in fourth spot on the ladder last time out, breaking even in the wins and losses columns and setting up a tasty elimination final contest with old foe Port Adelaide.

Tackling a Port side stacked with AFL-listed talent, the Bulldogs rallied after trailing at the end of the third term to emerge victorious by seven points.

Leading goalkicker for the season Aiden Grace was the star of the show with five majors, booting Centrals into the semi-final.

Despite falling short against eventual grand finalists Sturt, there was plenty to like from the side's third year under former club captain Thomas.

Perhaps the highlight of the campaign was the form of ball magnet Harry Grant, who not only managed club best and fairest honours, but became just the seventh Bulldog to take out the Magarey Medal.

The midfielder is the first Dog to win the award since Brad Symes in 2012, with coach Thomas also picking up the league-wide honour in 2004. Centrals' chances of venturing further into the finals this year will hinge partly on whether or not Grant can back up his impressive season, but there are plenty of Dogs in the yard. Kai Pudney has made the rare switch from Woodville Oval to the Ponderosa, bringing with him premiership experience and plenty of class.

His arrival will help mitigate the departure of club stalwarts Justin Hoskin and Luke Habel, while youngster Will McCabe will be plying his trade at Hawthorn after being

selected with pick number 19 in the 2023 national draft.

Also in the 'Ins' column is a plethora of interstate arrivals including son-of-a-gun Jack Callinan and promising utility Wilson Barry, who arrives from the Brisbane Lions VFL outfit.

Coach Thomas hinted at putting the side through a tough pre season in order to get the squad fit and ready for a big campaign, with further finals appearances on the agenda.

The men's side can draw inspiration from the all-conquering women's team that emerged as premiers in 2023 in dramatic fashion.

A Caitlen Teague goal in the dying seconds secured a three-point win for the Doggies over South Adelaide at Prospect Oval, claiming the side's first ever women's premiership in the process.

The women's side will be no doubt looking to defend their crown come season's end.

Harry Grant



Lions on the up after recruiting home runs

AFTER seasons of zero wins in 2021, two wins in 2022 and one win in 2023, 2024 is set to be a new dawn for the Central District Lions' NBL1 Central Women.

A spectacular recruiting haul for the Lady Lions has introduced an almost entirely new starting-five, including WNBL talent Casey Samuels from the Bendigo Spirit, West Adelaide Bearcats NBL1 standout Jasmin Fejo, and Adelaide Crows AFLW midfielder Taylah Levy.

Those three all reached at least 20 points in the Lions' Round 1 blowout victory against Eastern Mavericks – Levy's former team – and along with American recruit Lilly Ritz, that quartet figures to give Central District a chance every week.

In an interview with *The Bunyip*, Central District's NBL1 Central Women's coach Joe Noone said the club is serious about making progress in the women's ranks.

"We've had loads of change since I started with the club about 18 months ago," he said.

"Since that time we probably have two players remaining from the first day I walked in October 2022.

"The club and I have been really clear about what we are trying to do and how we need to change the culture and performance of the women's program. It's a journey we've started, and was always going to be hard,



Lilly Ritz, Jasmin Fejo, Casey Samuels and Taylah Levy.

and the progress was never going to be linear.

"In total we have added 10 new players to our extended NBL1 squad: Casey Samuels, Taylah Levy, Jasmin Fejo, Lilly Ritz, Bethany Dittmar, Lily Ziberski, Alyssa Brown, Stacey Franceschinis, Amalee Struck and Mollie Noone.

"That many new players gives us a great opportunity to build something new and reset expectations.

"We're planting those seeds of growth to

build a program that will eventually connect up with the great work the club is doing to build up our junior girls teams over recent years."

Meanwhile, the recruiters have also been busy on the men's side, securing five new additions.

As well as re-signing Branden Jenkins following his stellar 2023 campaign, the Lions added one more American import with Magnus Richards joining after a recent stint in Hong Kong.

Former Lion junior Koen Sapwell is back playing for his father, coach Rupert Sapwell, and with his brother and starting point guard Kalani, after returning from Germany.

Clayton Jewell is another Australian returning from the American college system, as was Victorian Lino Manhom.

Manhom made a serious first impression in Round 1, with the seven-footer starting at centre and racking up five blocks, five steals and 11 rebounds on debut.

Rounding out the six recruits is former Southern Tigers player Jimma Dau.

The Lions men were competitive without a lot of reward in 2023, finishing 4-14, but they will be eyeing a red-hot run to the finish this time around after the last of their recruits arrive ready to go in early May.

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