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Plans for future

Yarra Valley Grammar Ariels looking ahead as VNL season comes to a close

VNL Netball | David Turner

DESPITE falling short of the lofty heights of the 2007 and 2008 State League seasons, Yarra Valley Grammar Ariels ended the inaugural VNL Championship Division season with plenty to look forward to in 2010.

After reaching the finals in the past two seasons, Ariels had a frustrating 2009 campaign with personnel problems early in the season — the club had a large number of players regularly absent on state team duties — crumpling its campaign before it had time to start.

And, after rounding out the season with a 49-39 loss to the finals-bound Southern Saints at the State Netball Centre last Wednesday night, Ariels finished the season with 7-10-1 record and seventh place.

But, boasting the youngest line-up in the competition and with a 19&under side finishing fourth and set to take part in finals, there's plenty to like about the club's future, according to coach Christina Puopolo.

"We were pretty sad after Wednesday night's game, because it's all over," she said.

"But, the next morning, you get up and start planning.

"The wheel keeps turning. "The 19s are still playing and that's a high for the club.

"(Last week) they knocked the Saints off top spot and down to third so we have to play them again this week (in the minor semi-final)."

And, the Ariels have one eye a little further down the track with some junior development projects setting-up the club's future.

"We have the Yarra Jets team, which we put together," Puopolo said.

"And, that's serviced by the Whitehorse and Lilydale areas."

The Jets, made up of promising 14 and 15-year-olds, has recently played in the 17&under Premier Division at Waverley, winning the premiership, and will now contest the open age competition against older and stronger opponents in Premier 2 at Waverley.

And, after a short break, the Ariels' Championship Division side will start setting itself for 2010

VICTORIAN NETBALL LEAGUE

Championship Division

Hume City Falcons (63) v Peninsula Waves (40), Southern Saints (49) v Yarra Valley Grammar Ariels (39), VU Western Lightning (48) v Ballarat Pride (47), Boroondara Genesis (59) v North East Blaze (57), Geelong Cougars (47) v Monash University Central (68)

	W	L	D	%	Pts
Hume City Falcons	17	1	0	136.43	68
Monash Uni Central	13	5	0	123.33	52
Boroondara Genesis	13	5	0	114.70	52
Southern Saints	11	6	1	117.09	46
VU Western Lightning	11	6	1	108.80	46
North East Blaze	7	10	1	100.42	30
YV Grammar Ariels	7	10	1	91.36	30
Peninsula Waves	4	13	1	80.00	18
Ballarat Pride	2	15	1	77.54	10
Geelong Cougars	2	16	0	72.22	8

Division 1

Hume City Falcons (58) v Peninsula Waves (32), Southern Saints (60) v Yarra Valley Grammar Ariels (38), VU Western Lightning (37) v Ballarat Pride (60), Boroondara Genesis (43) v North East Blaze (46), Geelong Cougars (37) v Monash University Central (48)

	W	L	D	%	Pts
Hume City Falcons	15	3	0	126.10	60
Southern Saints	14	3	1	137.19	58
Ballarat Pride	14	3	1	127.85	58
Monash Uni Central	13	4	1	116.85	54
Boroondara Genesis	10	6	2	111.16	44
YV Grammar Ariels	6	11	1	95.89	26
VU Western Lightning	6	11	1	89.52	26
North East Blaze	6	12	0	84.06	24
Geelong Cougars	1	16	1	70.29	6
Peninsula Waves	1	17	0	66.39	4

19&Under

Hume City Falcons (48) v Peninsula Waves (30), Southern Saints (48) v Yarra Valley Grammar Ariels (50), VU Western Lightning (32) v Ballarat Pride (57), Boroondara Genesis (54) v North East Blaze (47), Geelong Cougars (59) v Monash University Central (41)

	W	L	D	%	Pts
Boroondara Genesis	15	2	1	125.80	62
Hume City Falcons	14	3	1	132.90	58
Southern Saints	14	3	1	126.42	58
YV Grammar Ariels	12	6	0	107.23	48
Geelong Cougars	10	8	0	113.32	40
Monash Uni Central	8	9	1	93.36	34
Peninsula Waves	6	11	1	91.81	26
North East Blaze	4	13	1	83.18	18
Ballarat Pride	2	14	2	85.60	12
VU Western Lightning	1	17	0	61.60	4

by playing in a Tuesday-night netball competition as well as forming a basketball team for some off-season cross-training.

"It's a long time from July to February, not playing anything," Puopolo said.

But, it is the club's future that most excites the coach.

"I'm already working on our Championship Division list for next season. It's so exciting," Puopolo said.

"Over the next couple of years, we'll definitely be dominant and be dominant right through the league."



Yarra Valley Grammar Ariels coach Christina Puopolo says there is plenty to like about her club's future in the Victorian Netball League.

Picture: CARMELO BAZZANO. S03MM608

Barkers down to Students

Soccer | Peter Stephenson

MOOROOLBARK ventured to Monash Uni Sports Oval on Saturday to play the second-placed students, who were unbeaten at home in Provisional League 1SE this season.

The Barkers made two changes, with Milan Djukic and Nhlanhla Dube coming in for the Topali brothers.

Dougie Shields was playing his 50th game.

Monash was quickly on the attack, with the speedy Munyaradzi Nyadzayo breaking free only to be thwarted by Erik Deichen after three minutes.

Nine minutes later, Deichen again won a one-on-one with Nyadzayo but the Barkers suffered a blow when Andrew Findlay fell awkwardly and was stretched off with a broken ankle.

On the quarter-hour, Cooke put a long ball into the danger zone, which found Dube who cleverly flicked the ball past the Uni keeper to give Barkers a surprise lead and Dube his first senior goal.

Then, on 24 minutes, the Uni right winger showed blistering pace to beat his man and send in a low cross, leaving Mick Goddard with a tap-in to equalise.

After another Uni shot curled wide, a free-kick on the right found Julio Serrano unmarked and he headed over Deichen to put Uni 2-1 up at half-time.

After Monash University dominated the early minutes of the second half, Mooroolbark stemmed the one-way traffic when Dube put Yiannaki Christoforou through, but his long-range shot went just over.

Eight minutes later, a poor clearance from Deichen, into the wind, was pounced on by Tim Foster and his shot, low into the corner of the net, made it 3-1.

Late in the game, Mooroolbark's luck deserted it when a free kick found Trent Hardcastle but his shot was deflected wide.

Monash University went to the top of the ladder with the win, on goal difference from Fitzroy, while Mooroolbark remains seventh.

Next up, Mooroolbark hosts the eighth-placed Old Melburnians to Esther Park Reserve.

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