

# SIMPLY THE BEST

*By: Kirstie Fitzgerald*

Now that the football season is done and dusted for another year, it's time we took a look back on the club best and fairest players who stood above the rest in 2013.

## ALBANVALE:

Despite missing out on the finals this year, one shining light for the Cobras was seeing the development of youngster **Sean Blake**. Having spent time developing his skills in the Western Jets squad last season, the 19-year-old was a standout for the Cobras in his debut year in the seniors, named in the best players nine times. Polling 82 votes to take home the club's Senior Best and Fairest Award, Blake is certainly one to watch out for in years to come.



## ALBION:

Playing every game this year for the Cats, **Todd Finco** was always going to poll well come season's end. Whilst many football players these days move from club to club, Finco has played his entire 278 game career with the Cats since he first started in the Under 10s. Despite winning just four matches this year, Finco made sure his time spent on the field counted, named in the best 11 times and kicking 24 goals for the season. With a few years in the senior squad under his belt, Finco is sure to be a dominate force on the field next year.



## ALTONA:

It was a disappointing year for the Division One reigning premiers, having finished in fourth place for the season. Yet the efforts of **Steve Kennedy** did not go overlooked, having another standout year for the Vikings. Named in the best ten times this year, Kennedy kicked 18 goals and was named in the half back flank in the 2013 Division One WRFL Team of the Year. Finishing fourth in the Barry Priest Medal on 16 votes, Kennedy capped off his stellar year with Altona's Best and Fairest Award.



## BRAYBROOK:

Transferring from the Coburg Districts Football Club at the end of season 2012, **Luke Johnson** has been a star pick up for Braybrook this year. Currently residing in Sunbury, Johnson played every game for the Brookers this season, racking up numerous possessions week in week out. Polling strongly throughout the season, Johnson took home best and fairest honors on 84 votes, whilst Brent Buckow won the Reserves best on 69 votes.



### CAROLINE SPRINGS:

What a season **David Cavanagh** has had this year! Not only did the Caroline Springs Captain take home the best and fairest award on 32 votes, but he also won the chance to pull on the Big V jumper and play alongside some of the AFL's greats in this year's EJ Whitten Legends Game. Kicking a career high 24 goals for the season, Cavanagh stood tall as a leader both on and off the field. Reserves player Marc Raak took home both League and club best and fairest awards for his performance in the Reserves this year with 27 votes, whilst young Mitch Gilbert was crowned the club's best under 18s player.



### DEER PARK:

They say all bad things come in threes, well in **Kwame McHarg's** case, it's the complete opposite. Recruited to Deer Park from Williamstown at the end of the 2012 season, McHarg has had a year to remember. Adding to his Division One Premiership medallion earlier in the year, McHarg also took home the coveted Andrew Gibson Medal for the Division One leading goal kicker on 69 goals. With lightning quick speed and silky skills, McHarg was named as a half forward flank in the 2013 Div 1 Team of the Year and came third in the Barry Priest Medal on 19 votes. Capping off his trifecta season was the Deer Park Best and Fairest Award where he polled 130 votes ahead of Barry Priest medalist Shannon Broadbent who finished with 99 votes.



### GLEN ORDEN:

Originally from Shepparton, **Dashmir Barolli** made the switch to play for Glen Orden at the start of the 2012 season and has never looked back. Having played only a handful of games in his debut year for the Hawks, Barolli has improved in leaps and bounds this season, playing all 20 matches for the gold and brown as well as kicking a career high 33 goals. Adding a premiership medallion to his trophy cabinet this year, Barolli capped off his season with the club's best and fairest award, finishing with 130 votes.



### HOPPERS CROSSING:

Despite missing out on the finals series, long time Hoppers Crossing player **Matthew Smith** was a wave of encouragement for the Warriors, taking home the best and fairest medallion. Playing over 300 games throughout his career, Smith has played 295 of them in the navy and white uniform, a testament to his dedication to the club. Playing every game for the Warriors this season, we're yet to see the last of this talented 24-year-old.



### LAVERTON MAGPIES:

Playing for the black and white since he was a junior, **Bryan Lawry** has been a source of inspiration at the Laverton Magpies Football Club. Playing nearly 280 career games for the Magpies, Lawry stood tall for the senior side yet again this year, taking home the club's best and fairest honors. With five seasons in the senior squad under his belt, Lawry is sure to lead his team in the right direction on the field in 2014.



### MANOR LAKES:

**Andrew Heyde** has made history this year, winning Manor Lakes' inaugural best and fairest award on 85 votes. Playing most of his career with the Melton Football Club in the Ballarat Football League, Heyde transferred to Manor Lakes at the start of the season and hasn't looked back. Having a really solid year for the Storm, Heyde played almost every game for the club, with his form improving each week. Despite missing out on a Grand Final appearance in their debut year, Heyde's efforts did not go unnoticed, finishing fifth in the Alan Smith Medal on 19 votes, ahead of teammate Francisco Pavez on 18.



### NORTH FOOTSCRAY:

Originally playing in the Albury Wodonga Football League and the Ovens & Murray Football League as a junior, **Patrick Jackson** made the switch to the WRFL in 2011 to play with North Footscray. Since his debut, Jackson has been Mr. Consistent, having missed just the one home and away game over the past three seasons. Whilst the Devils could not string together a win this year, the 21-year-old continued to perform well on the field, finishing with 14 goals and a club Best and Fairest trophy for the season.



### NORTH SUNSHINE:

Winning their first senior game of football since 2008 against the Laverton Magpies this season, North Sunshine was in good form early in the piece. Another Roadrunner who was in good form was **Josh Moody**, who took home the club's Best & Fairest. Playing for North Sunshine as a junior in the Under 16s, Moody had a one year stint in the EDFL before returning to the Roadrunners this year after having a season off. Named in the club's best on ten occasions this season, Moody is among one of the best players to wear the red, white and black in recent times.



### PARKSIDE:

When you think of the Parkside Football Club, you simply can't go past the efforts of **Chris Muratore**. Despite missing out on a premiership medallion, Muratore's season was one to be proud of, taking home the club Best and Fairest on 68 votes and finishing fourth in the Division Two Alan Smith Medal (20 votes). A ball magnet around the packs, Muratore was instrumental in the team's dominant season, named in the club's best ten times. Playing more than 100 games for the black and white, Muratore will be keen to help his team go one better next season, to take home the coveted premiership cup.





### **PORT MELBOURNE COLTS:**

Smart with the football and quick around the packs, **Brad Sutcliffe** had an impressive year for the red and blue. Playing numerous years with the Colts as a junior, Sutcliffe tried his hand in the VFL for a couple of seasons, before return to local football to play in the EDFL. Having spent three seasons with Avondale Heights, Sutcliffe returned to the Colts in 2012, where he recorded a massive 43 possessions in one game. Carrying on from his impressive form, this year has been no exception, named in the best on eight occasions from just 14 games.



### **SANCTUARY LAKES:**

Coming into the league as a new club this year, I'm sure many local football fans would not have expected a Sanctuary Lakes player take home the competition Best and Fairest Award. Yet 19-year-old **Jessi Lampi** proved the critics' wrong, taking home the club's inaugural Best and Fairest award and the Alan Smith Medal in the same year. A Point Cook player all his life, Lampi made the switch to the Sharks with his brother Jordon who was named captain of the senior squad. Despite finishing the season with six wins in their debut year, Jessi was named in the club's best on an incredible 16 occasions from just 18 appearances. Winning the Division One Under 18s Best and Fairest in 2012 and earning a 2013 Rookie of the Year nomination, Lampi is sure to wreak havoc on the field for the Sharks next season.



### **SPOTSWOOD:**

What a rollercoaster 12months is has been for Spotswood's **Chris O'Keefe**. Despite having lost the Grand Final by an agonizing one point for the second year in a row, the much admired Spotswood playing coach had yet another outstanding individual year. Known as a player who doesn't miss an opportunity with the ball, O'Keefe kicked 38 goals for the green and gold this season and was named in the WRFL Team of the Year. Crowned as the 2013 SEN Most Valuable Player, O'Keefe took home the club's Best and Fairest award on 148 votes, ahead of Michael Fogarty (123 votes) and Murray Boyd (121 votes). Capping off his stellar season was his second consecutive medal Barry Priest Medal, which he shared with Deer Park's Shannon Broadbent on 21 votes. The win sees O'Keefe become just the fifth man to win back to back Barry Priest medals in the 82 year history of the league.



### **ST.ALBANS:**

Residing in Sunbury, **Lachlan Baddeley** played a number of years for the Rupertswood Football Club in the Victorian Amateur Football Association before heading to the Werribee Tigers Football Club to play in the VFL for four seasons. Having played another two years for Rupertswood in 2011-2012, Baddeley made the move to St.Albans at the start of 2013 where he has gone from strength to strength. Playing all 19 games for the Saints this year, Baddeley was named in the best on nine occasions and kicked a career high 40 goals. Collecting numerous votes throughout the year, Baddeley was named in the top ten in the Barry Priest Medal finishing in equal 10<sup>th</sup> place with Spotswood's Murray Boyd on 11 votes.



### **SUNSHINE:**

Displaying some of his 2007 Barry Priest Medal form this season, one of Sunshine's favourite sons, **Russell Douglas** has taken out the club's Best and Fairest Award on 99 votes. Named in the Kangaroos' best players a staggering 13 times this year, Douglas impressed football goers with his silky skills week in, week out. Finishing in equal ninth place in the 2013 Barry Priest Medal with St.Albans' Joel West, Douglas was also named on the interchange in the WRFL Division One Team of the Year.



### **SUNSHINE HEIGHTS:**

19-year-old **Justin Zahra** is one to look out for next season, having claimed his second consecutive Best and Fairest trophy for the Sunshine Heights Football Club. Beginning his career with the Dragons as a junior, Zahra spent two seasons with the Sunshine Football Club in the Under 18s before returning to the club in 2011 to play senior football. Despite playing one less game than last year, Zahra improved in all aspects of his game this season, kicking seven goals and named in the team's best 11 times. With a lot of good football ahead him, the sky's the limit for this talented young man in the future.



### **WEST FOOTSCRAY:**

Despite winning just five games for the season, **Jadyn Trowsdale's** dedication and hard work ethic did not go unnoticed this year, crowned as West Footscray's Best and Fairest. Having played many years with the St.Albans Football Club as a junior, Trowsdale made the switch to West Footscray in 2008 where he has fast become known as one of the club's best midfielders. Playing alongside club great Mark Speakman across the middle of the ground, Trowsdale managed to boot 22 goals for the year and finish in eighth position in this year's Alan Smith Medal.



### **WYNDHAMVALE:**

Claiming runners up honors in the Alan Smith Medal on 23 votes in just his second year for the club, it's safe to say Wyndhamvale's **Devan Ellis** has had a good year. Growing up playing for Werribee Districts as a junior, Ellis moved to Werribee Centrals where he got his first taste of senior football in the Under 18s squad in the Geelong and District Football League. Joining the Falcons in 2012, the 23-year-old had a solid year for the club this season, kicking 18 goals and named in the best on 12 occasions.



### **YARRAVILLE SEDDON:**

Rounding off the club best and fairest awards is **Shane Barry** from the Yarraville Seddon Eagles, who took home the award on 62 votes. Playing in the EDFL for Tullamarine for many years, Barry jumped ship to play for the Albanvale Football Club for two seasons, before joining up with the Eagles at the start of 2012. An asset for the Eagles across the mid-section of the ground, Barry's extensive football experience earned him eight nominations in the club's best on field performers this year. Despite winning four games this season, Barry played 17 games and finished with eight goals for 2013.



## **2013 CLUB SENIOR BEST AND FAIREST TABLE**

<b>Albanvale</b>	Sean Blake
<b>Albion</b>	Todd Finco
<b>Altona</b>	Steve Kennedy
<b>Braybrook</b>	Luke Johnson
<b>Caroline Springs</b>	David Cavanagh
<b>Deer Park</b>	Kwame McHarg
<b>Glen Orden</b>	Dashmir Barolli
<b>Hoppers Crossing</b>	Matthew Smith
<b>Laverton Magpies</b>	Bryan Lawry
<b>Manor Lakes</b>	Andrew Hyde
<b>North Footscray</b>	Patrick Jackson
<b>North Sunshine</b>	Josh Moody
<b>Parkside</b>	Chris Muratore
<b>Port Melbourne Colts</b>	Brad Sutcliffe
<b>Sanctuary Lakes</b>	Jessi Lampi
<b>Spotswood</b>	Chris O'Keefe
<b>St.Albans</b>	Lachlan Baddeley
<b>Sunshine</b>	Russell Douglas
<b>Sunshine Heights</b>	Justin Zahra
<b>West Footscray</b>	Jadyn Trowsdale
<b>Wyndhamvale</b>	Devan Ellis
<b>Yarraville Seddon</b>	Shane Barry