



Thornleigh Sports & Recreation Club Inc.

# SOCCER DIVISION

## Blue & Gold Newsletter

17-18 July 2010



Deadline for Blue & Gold: MONDAY 12pm Email to: [reports@thunderfc.org.au](mailto:reports@thunderfc.org.au)

### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Well the soccer season is certainly slipping away as we head to the end of the regular season. We still have two wet weather matches to catch up on and we should hear soon from the GHFA on how they will be organised.

Quite a number of our junior and senior men and women teams are in contention to finish in the top four placings for a chance to play in the playoffs. The next few games are very important and I am sure everyone will be making the most of the remaining games. Our Premier League side is battling to keep within the top four finishers and will be throwing everything they have to ensure they are there for the finals.

Dates have been selected for the junior presentation and senior presentation / club night. These dates will be on our website and a reminder will be sent out as we draw closer to the time.

Thank you again to everyone who assisted in getting the season off to such a fine start. Great planning always results in a great season and this one is certainly no exception and a credit to the organising committee.

Yours in commitment

**Rob Roberts,**  
TTFC President

### OAKLEIGH #1 HOME GROUNDS FOR SATURDAY 24TH JULY 2010

Hi Thunder:

GAMES at OAKLEIGH oval this week are:

AM WILL SEE SOME MINI HOME GAMES...

8.15am- 13/5 THORNLEIGH SPORTS CLUB V EPPING YMCA

9.30am- 10/2 THORNLEIGH SPORTS CLUB V RYDE SAINTS UNITED

10.30am- 11/3 THORNLEIGH SPORTS CLUB V PENNANT HILLS

11.45am- 16/3 THORNLEIGH SPORTS CLUB V ROSELEA SOCCER

1.15pm- PLR THORNLEIGH SPORTS CLUB V EPPING EASTWOOD

3.15pm- PLF THORNLEIGH SPORTS CLUB V EPPING EASTWOOD

For your info:

Premier league will play the games 31st of July as per the 24th of July draw

Premier league will play the games 7th of August as per the 17th of July draw – Home Game

Also on this Saturday, For your info:

Normanhurst are having a "Back to Normo Day" at Harris Street Oval, Normanhurst should any ex Normo players wish to drop in and catch up with old friends. Lots of Fun rides ect



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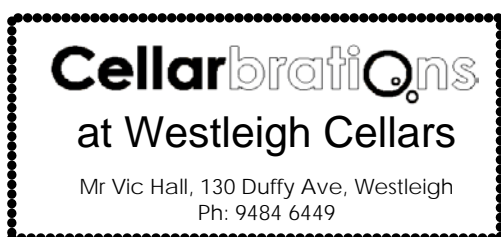
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#### **U6 RED THORNLEIGH 2 vs. HILLS HAWKES A 0**

Brilliant effort! The team played like Spain! After the holiday break the team were eager to get on the field!

We dominated from the kick off, JACOB HAARSMAD our "Player of the Match" was on fire with some amazing defence and stopped many of the Hawkes attempts at goal. Fancy feet AMY HASTIE was a force to be reckoned with slamming a goal in to the back of the net in the first half. In the second half there was some more great defence from TYSON BRIDGEWOOD, CERYS HOWELL and JONATHAN EGGERS deflecting a couple more of the Hawkes attempts at goal. With five minutes to go AMY HASTIE kicked missile into the back of the net to seal the win and break a 7 game losing streak. WELL DONE TEAM.



#### **THORNLEIGH 7 vs. PENNANT HILLS 2**

The boys really played well this weekend and seemed to grab the concept of Team Work. AUSTIN OATES stepped up to help the opposition for the first half of the game and played his heart out. Thornleigh showed some great attacking runs, along with fantastic passing between the team.

OLIVER PATCHETT opened the game today with a goal, closely followed by a goal by BLAKE HARRIS after a great combination run with ADAM MASON. BLAKE had a great run down towards our goals, but just missed short of a goal. Fortunate for us it was knocked in by the opposition taking the score to 3-0. OLIVER MADDREN had fast legs today, chasing the ball down the field, he was just unlucky to not score.

The second half opened with a good combination run by OLIVER, BLAKE AND AUSTIN, but Pennant Hills had some great defenders and the goal was cut off. AUSTIN opened the second half of the game with a goal, closely followed by his

second goal. A group effort by all the boys saw the ball taken down towards the goals, the ball being knocked in by OLIVER PATCHETT. Another great combination run by ADAM and BLAKE was cut off from scoring again by great defenders from Pennant Hills. Our defence was a real winner this week with OLIVER MADDREN showing his star qualities trying to keep the opposition at bay and limiting their goals to just 2 while ADAM MASON worked hard at getting the ball down towards our goals. OLIVER PATCHETT had a very strong game with some attacking runs scoring his third goal for the day just before the end of the game. It was a great game to watch and the boys have really come a long way.

#### **U7 KOOKABURRA GREEN B THORNLEIGH B 4 vs. HILLS HAWKS A 1**

A rocky start by our team in this week's game saw the boys go one goal down early on in the first half. Doing their hardest to break through the Hills Hawks defence RYAN BARON and ANDREW PINES' efforts helped settle the team down and get into their stride. Shots on the opposition's goal soon became more frequent but these unfortunately were going wide of the posts. In attack and defence ZAC DUNLOP was proving to be a handful for HILLS HAWKS along with LUCAS WU who was providing great back-up.

The boys went to the half time break still the one goal down and we hoped that things would turn around in the second half especially after coach Dunlop's instructions.

Our hopes were realised when JACK BIDWELL, with the ball at his feet, made one of his barging runs forward and kept going until he put the ball into the back of the Hills Hawks net. Another cracker of a shot soon after from JACK rattled the whole goal when it hit the framework and carried on out of the field of play. More punching kicks forward by AXIE TADZIK kept the ball in the opposition's half where ALISTAIR WESTON was waiting to pounce on any loose balls. Thornleigh's second goal came from a brilliant run forward by HARRISON HOWARD where he dribbled the ball past whatever Hills Hawks threw at him before kicking it into their goal. We thought that was pretty special but HARRISON had more where that came from. He followed it up with another two similar superb goals raising both his arms above his head on each occasion.

When the final whistle blew THORNLEIGH had managed a great come from behind win. The game also witnessed some splendid footballing skills including dribbling, kicking and above all looking to pass the ball to a team mate. This week's Best and Fairest awards were presented to HARRISON HOWARD and JACK BIDWELL. Well done HARRISON and JACK!

#### **U8 YELLOW THORNLEIGH 1 vs. EPPING YMCA B 1**

Everyone on the team made an outstanding effort to contain this fast opposition who made breaks and chances at goal difficult to come by. MIKEY was outstanding in goals in the first half keeping the opposition scoreless with a gutsy on-on-one effort shortly before half time. ALEXANDRA had a shot from close range through the wall of defenders and TIMON had a multiple attempts from range including a spectacular volley. IRIS had an inspirational run with the ball before passing while MITCHELL was like a greyhound sweeping up the break-away attacks from the opposition. ZOE jockeyed in the goal square to spoil the opposition's corner attempts and MILES pressed forward with his lightning speed and take no prisoners tackles. TOM combined well with MILES to feed the ball forward to the Thornleigh attack. The first half remained scoreless but it

wasn't long into the second before TIMON broke with the defence and squeezed a shot inside the left post to put Thornleigh ahead. TOM made some huge clearance kicks during his turn in goals as well as a charge down that saved a certain goal. Alexandra and IRIS had a second wind and dodged and weaved through the opposition regularly. MITCHELL was deadly with his throws and corners and MIKEY was a dynamo on the field with multiple steam rolling runs through the middle of the field. Thornleigh were ready to celebrate victory when EPPING scored in the last seconds from a inside post deflection that left TOM no chance of saving. A great spirit all round with MIKEY voted man of the match. Many thanks to ADAM for coaching.

#### **U8 THORNLEIGH Green 7 v Redfield Lions 1**

Redfield took the kick and dominated for the first minutes of the game with an early shot at goal, saved by goalkeeper EDWARD. Thornleigh regrouped with forwards HARRY and SAM taking a number of long runs and shots at goal, all saved by the Redfield keeper. From a great save (and using the massive goalkeeper box at Redfield College 2) our keeper EDWARD kicked over the half way line, HARRY made a run, supported by SAM, and took the first goal of the match. From there Thornleigh were untouchable - BEN and MASON did excellent work in midfield to give the forwards opportunities at goal and the strong defence from CALLUM, JACOB and EDWARD kept Redfield from converting any runs into goals. SAM then took Thornleigh's second goal by following up on a fumbled save. TOM and LACHLAN came on to replace CALLUM and JACOB and together with EDWARD prevented Redfield from scoring while BEN had a good shot at goal and SAM took goals 3 and 4 before half time.

In the second half both MASON and TOM set EDWARD up for two strong shots at goal, both saved by the Redfield keeper who was getting plenty of practice. Great defence from HARRY and SAM kept Redfield out of our goals while JACOB enjoyed roaming the vast real estate of the goalkeeper box between Redfield attacks. TOM then crossed to LACHLAN who shot to take our fifth goal. Redfield finally broke through our strong defence and great work in goals by JACOB to score their first goal - 5-1. Shortly afterward CALLUM intercepted a Redfield ball and took a long, strong shot for our 6th. JACOB, HARRY and SAM kept up the great defence, supported by TOM and BEN. On the final whistle EDWARD made a long pass to LACHLAN who cunningly deflected it into goal to our final score of 7-1.

#### **U9/7 THORNLEIGH 1 v MCS 1**

This week saw our team come up against the Maquarie Dragons, who were topping the table with us and thus was a game that could've made the season for both teams. In a hard fought game, the players gave it all and the game was back and forth. We dominated in the first half and CHRISTIAN CLONARIS who took up goal, could've had a picnic as didn't have anything to do, in the second half he played right midfield with great enthusiasm and made a number of great runs. The defensive fortress that is JARET WILSON, BRADLEY HOWARD and REILLY KING let nothing through. JARET was like a tiger on any loose ball and BRAD cleared the ball with his booming boot. REILLY played an awesome game with great tackles and clearances. LEON AGALAWATTA had some impressive runs down the left side of the field combining well with JORDAN-LEE BACON, who managed to get another goal

this week, after a great team effort, and JONATHAN CHAN, who were controlling the midfield and running down every ball. Some deft passes by JL and JONATHAN set up LEON and OLIVER DEWEY who was flying up the right side of the field during the first half, with great aggression and determination.

TARA WILSON showed that she was keen to tackle anyone that came her way and gave it her all. DANIEL PATTERSON was fighting fit this week, after being ill, and was raring to go and really got stuck into the MCS defence and came close to scoring on a number of occasions.

JACOB KALNINS and TOM MADDREN, were 2 U8's who came to help us this week and didn't they give it their all. Both boys played with determination and made some great runs and clearances. We're happy to have them be part of our team. But special mention must go to OLIVER DEWEY who took up goal in the 2nd half who did a splendid job with fantastic saves which wouldn't be out of place in the Soccer World Cup.

Great game OLIVER we're all very proud of you.

#### **U9/3 THORNLEIGH 2 vs. PUTNEY 1**

It was a sunny day with an icy chill in the air. Thornleigh played Putney in a well matched competition. Missed from play today was FARNHAM. We started out with NICK on goals making a couple of great saves. At half time we still had a score of nil all. There was great excitement and cheers when the first goal of the game was kicked three quarters through the game by CONNOR. It was as always a great team effort getting the ball in place to score a goal. BEN and NICK both using their noggins, RUBEN kicking some long kicks down the field and MATTHEW running that ball right down the side. AIDEN consistently ran the opposition right off the field not letting them near the goal. At one point RUBEN took control of that ball and almost took it to a goal when he hit the wall of the Putney's imposing goalie. ISAAC took the demanding position of goalie in the second half. Unfortunately the opposition snuck one by him but only by kicking a fast one right in the bottom left hand corner of the net. Great effort from ISAAC who blocked more that got through. So much action in the last quarter when CONNOR made another kick for the goal which was just shy. Then when the Referee called a penalty kick after BEN went down the tension was palpable. BEN took the pressure in his stride and kicked that goal straight in bringing us to a score of two nil. It was great to see VERONICA getting into the action keeping the ball in play. WILLIAM got in some impressive long passes and HARRISON was running like the wind keeping up with the action as the ball spent as much time at one end of the field as the other. Overall player of the match was CASSANDRA who was full of energy and in the game with enthusiasm. She took control of the ball and made some great passes likely putting to practice some skills picked up from holiday soccer clinic. With this win of two to one we are now placed 2nd on the ladder. Looking forward to a nail biting final for an exciting finish to the season. Keep up the great effort at training and heed those tips from the coach team.

#### **U10/2 THORNLEIGH 2 vs. REDFIELD COLLEGE 0**

This week's away game saw the 4th placed Thunder take on 3rd placed Redfield College. There has been a familiar pattern this season with our 8.15am games – we seem to get off to slow start and don't really warm up until the last 5 minutes and today was no exception. From the opening whistle Thunder dominated possession and field position against a depleted

Redfield outfit without finding the back of the net for a majority of the first half.

Our midfielders consisting of LACHLAN HARRIS, CODY JERVIS, JOSHUA MUCH and DYLAN ARUNCHIAYPORN were feeding both forwards ROWAN WOOD and DYLAN DONOVAN on plenty of occasions only to be stopped by a determined Redfield backline. JOSH WATKINS who spent a majority of the game warming the bench due to illness was brought on just prior to half time and made an impact immediately by slotting in the first goal of the game. The half time whistle was blown with the Thunder were leading 1-0.

Coach Isted attempted to rev up the boys with an inspirational half time speech that seemed to fall upon deaf ears. The second half commenced and the resistance from the Redfield boys continued. ZANE GEORGE was playing his usual high standard game and seemed to be everywhere; he was well supported by defenders TOM SELLIN and TIM REYNOLDS who both kept a close check on their opposite number.

Our Goalie ZAC MCLEOD was again solid and kept the pressure on with some huge kicks downfield to keep Redfield on the back foot. TRISTAN FISHER was playing enterprising soccer and shut down a number of attacking raids throughout the game. Midway through the second half and the score remained at 1-0. JOSHUA WATKINS was re-introduced into the match and again found the back of the net through a free kick to take the score to 2-0 and equal third place on the premiership ladder.

Congratulations to TRISTAN FISHER on his "Man of the Match" award, TRISTAN had an outstanding game and ensured the Redfield defence did not pass him. This victory guaranteed that the boys qualified for the Championship semi-finals – well done boys.

Go Thunder

### **U12/2 GIRLS THORNLEIGH 2 vs. ROSLEA 0**

With the girls suffering from holiday hangovers both teams were quite scrappy in the initial stages. It took a well structured goal to break the deadlock starting with a wonderful kick out from our goal keeper EVIE JEFFERY to the midfield who supplied a great through ball to the strikers where CARLIE McALISTER pounced on it and slotted away superbly. All the girls tried hard with particular mention to EMILY TAYLOR, ANNIKA REYNOLDS, JULIA MOKDSI, and LISA MOUTON.

The second half started off much the same as the first. Thornleigh scrambled well in defence and diffused Roslea's attacks continually. Solid clearing kicks from ISABEL SEAMAN, NATASHA FLETCHER, and LAUREN BALL frustrated the opposition. Thornleigh were the dominating side with strong physical play from EVIE JEFFREY and LISA MOUTON eventually leading to another great Thornleigh goal from CARLIE McALISTER who took the ball from inside Thornleigh's half carving through the Roslea defence and finishing with precision for her 2nd of the game. Thornleigh had the better of the chances in the second half and with a little more composure could have increased their advantage. Well done girls, another hard fought win.

Player of the game was LISA MOUTON.

### **U13/5 THORNLEIGH 11 vs. HOLY CROSS 0 (Have Pic)**

A bye the week before and no training during the week led to another slowish start by the Thunder, who needed a big win today to try to stay in first place on goal difference from the

pursuing Epping YMCA. But once NATALIE BARKER slotted home the first goal from a BEN WALLWOOD corner after six minutes, the goals began to flow. BEN W got the second goal himself just two minutes later from an unselfish BEN JONES pass on the edge of the box, with BENJ scoring the third after a nice solo run. We then kept up the pressure, and only some good saves from the Holy Cross keeper and the woodwork stopped more goals coming. The defence of RYAN MALLETT, ANDREW HADDAD, MARK RICHARDS, SLADE BLANCH and BEN SEPAROVICH was very solid, barely letting Holy Cross into our half. First half keeper NATHAN BIRRELL had little to do other than contemplate the lovely winter weather, as he literally did not touch the ball during his stint in goals. With goals needed, it was a rude shock to hear the half time whistle blow 6 minutes early, a late start meaning the ref had to cut off some time. At 3-0 we were safe, but more goals were needed.

Due to the team's hard work, the goals came in a flood in the second half – eight in all. An own goal two minutes into the second half from a wicked SAM DRUMM cross made it 4-0. Enjoying a rare run up front, NATHAN put away goal number five (another cross from SAM, who delivered good passes and crosses all day), and later got a second. BEN W got his second goal from a great through ball from BEN S, and a third from another BEN J assist. BEN W returned the favour shortly after, setting up BEN J for his second. BEN W managed a fourth goal from a quick break away, and then SAM deservedly got on the score sheet curling in a fine left foot shot from the edge of the box after a pass from MAX KENNEDY. MITCHELL DUGGAN toiled hard all day and was unlucky not to get on the score sheet. Second half goalie MARK also never got to touch the ball, an after the game queried whether we could play rush goalies in future. Maybe.

So it all comes down to the last game of the season, a clash with second placed Epping YMCA at the Home of The Thunder – Oakleigh Oval, 8.15am, Saturday 24 July. With Epping dropping two points over the weekend, all we need is a draw to be crowned Premiers, but it would be great to win the league in style with a win over our closest rivals. One thing is for sure – win, lose or draw, the Thunder will do their best, as they have all season.

### **U15/3 THORNLEIGH 3 vs. GLENHAVEN 1**

With only one reserve and without our usual star goalie it was going to be a challenge we knew, but not one we would have difficulty in overcoming. It was a rather lacklustre start to the game with the opposition once again dictating the flow of the game. Even so, Thornleigh did manage to drive the ball forward to the opposition's goal area on a number of occasions, but none of these opportunities could be converted into goals. With both sides utilising only a quarter of the field at times, it was pretty much a case of trampling each other to get at the ball which also caused a 'lack of space' to move the ball. However, both sides were affected by this. It was the opposition that broke through in the 13th minute to score the first goal. This was followed soon after by another near goal – luckily the opposition player was caught off sides. It wasn't too long after this that JACK ANGEL had the ball near the opposition's goals and with a brilliant manoeuvre with the help of SAM LANE got the ball past the last player to score our first goal. CALLUM MOSES did a sterling job as goalie for us in the absence of JOSHUA COOPER in the first half and BEAU DEACON had no problem doing the same in the second half.

Our second goal came in the 24th minute off the boot of THOMAS HIGGINS in one of those frequent scuffles we had right in front of the opposition's goals. Suddenly he saw the gap and with one almighty kick pounded the ball home past the defence and goalie. As usual the team seemed to shift a gear in the second half and we found ourselves at the opposition's goals a number of times. MATTHEW FORD had some marvellous runs up the side ending with some good goal attempts while OLIVER JUDSON came close to scoring on more than one occasion. SAMUEL LANE played his trademark steady passing game and LOGAN RANDALL-PENN and DARREN JOOSTEN used their speed as usual to get us out of trouble on a number of occasions. The final goal came in the 24th minute - with the opposition's defence all over the place it was amazing to see JACK ANGEL once again find the gap and score! Man of the match awards went to the two goalies – CALLUM MOSES and BEAU DEACON and to the star midfielder SAMUEL LANE.



#### **U16/2 Girls THORNLEIGH 1 vs. BEECROFT 2**

We always have a good game against this team, even though they are sitting at no 2 on the ladder. The game proceeded very evenly up to half time, and we were even at 1 all. The key to the game today was the good positional play and good passing between the girls, especially GEORGIA DAVIS, TERESA SANT, CLAUDIA DAFEL, BECKY FOWLER up front to SAM TREES and EMILIE LOWE. JESSICA HARRIS had another great game defending well and then feeding balls up the sideline to the strikers.

SAMMIE TRENAMAN and BRITTANY KNIGHT were very busy in goal, coming out strategically to put off their forwards. AZIZA RAZIUDDIN, BECKY FOWLER and LISA PHILLIPS had their usual strong games in defence. We should have had

a draw but Beecroft scored two quick goals in the last five minutes when we were getting tired. The team worked hard, due to a few absentees and a hot day. But we were lucky this week to be playing at home and are thankful to SARAH BROWNE AND DANIELLE BROWN for stepping in as reserves. The girls last time we played Beecroft was 5 to 3 loss, so again we have a better margin than last time.

#### **U16/3 THORNLEIGH 0 vs. EASTWOOD ST ANDREWS 1**

The boys have faced this sort of narrow margin all season in a comp that has seen 4-5 teams jockeying for prime position right from the start. Eastwood vs Thornleigh has always been an interesting face off and today was no exception. But before we get into the report proper, the spirit of this fine club must be noted. The boys were facing the proposition of fielding 10 on the pitch today, with one of these recovering from a gastric bug. It wasn't looking good. Enter CHRIS LOWE (manager for U14 2's) who rallied his troops to produce four volunteers to run a second game – just AWESOME. Thank you CHRIS. A HUGE thank you to TOM LOWE, ANDRE MUNOZ, his 11 year old brother IZAACK MUNOZ and ADRIAN COLOUTI. These boys showed gutsy determination and skill to keep our boys in the game for the full 70 minutes of play. Thank you also to NIKKI LOWE and CARLOS MUNOZ for delivering the boys to the ground.

High drama was the order of the day as these two evenly matched teams went head to head. BIG KEV CHENG was on in defence today, hustling the big Eastwood forwards with terrier like determination and sending the ball with some of his trademark headers back down the field. He was supported admirably by our ever reliable sweeper, DOM 'the steamroller' BORG. When the ball did get past DOM, JACK "the transformer" LEWIN more often than not twisted limbs like Houdini to send the skin back to our forward mids. Not feeling 100%, JONOTHAN HALL was saved the midfield torture runs to play central defender. He's got a great kick on him! Almost as big as his throw-ins – one of which today we estimated at 15-20 metres.

HUW 'Mr placement' FISHER sent some beautiful through balls today, creating real chances for our forwards., while MICHAEL GAMBLE and WILL SOWDEN hustled doggedly in the middle. ADRIAN COLOUTI wasn't afraid to take the big boys on. STEVE GAMBLE's call from the sideline to this U14 stand in, "Go you little kid!" said it all. The same can be said for IZAACK MUNOZ who stuck with his man all the way, hustling and frustrating the Eastwood mids. Centre Mid, PETER THOMS was instrumental in sneaking the ball through the gaps to forwards such as TOM LOWE, ANDRE MUNOZ who anticipated the chances and began runs early – exciting stuff. MICHAEL BRADLEY found himself covering much of the pitch today – This midfielder is feeling starved of goals and is always keen to get up front.

But the heart-stopping action today was all in our defensive box, with goalie, XAVIER BOUCHER facing 2 Eastwood penalty kicks and 1 Eastwood free kick. The first penalty went embarrassingly wide for Eastwood, the free was just wide. The second penalty, however, was right on the money, the ball sweetly placed low in the right corner of the net. It was hard to watch – especially as the boys had moments before staved off an aggressive Eastwood attack, with XAVIER deflecting the ball 3 times in the space of 10 seconds during an all-in-the-box melee. And that was the ball game. Not the result we were

hoping for, but a fine show from the Thunders nevertheless. Until next week.

#### **U18/1 THORNLEIGH Thunder 0 – 4 Hills Hawks**

Hills Hawks were always going to be a tough team to beat, they are physical on the ball and run into space to produce opportunities for themselves. Super Coach Craig Denyer decided to defend in the second half and dropped another person into the backs from the forwards, so we were playing 5-4-1 formations. This tactic was working like a charm in the first 20min of play. LUCUS was holding the five defenders together as he seemed to be the only one with vocal chords out there. While mostly defending, we managed still come up with some goal scoring chances with BRENDAN having a long range dig that just got touched over the crossbar by their goalie. Another shot (attempted cross) from the right hit the far post and dribbled out of play. Unfortunately something cracked and they put one past us. They potted another in a few minutes after that, chipping SAMSON in goals. Two nil down at halftime.

The second half brought upon new tactics. Switching back to our old 4-4-2 formation meant that our backs had to stay focused. We were looking good at the start of the second half with two attackers up front. BEENIE managed to slip one into the back of the net after a free kick outside the box was fumbled by the keeper, only to have a dodgy call against him and be brought back for offside. There wasn't much entertainment after that as they knocked a couple more past us. I'd like to acknowledge CONNOR SAMSON for filling in as keeper. His left boot was still on show, even in goals. Next week is a must win against St Andrews if we want any chance in making it into the top four.

This week's match reporter – Warwick Sparkes

#### **U18/1 Girls THORNLEIGH 6 vs. ALL SAINTS HUNTERS HILL 0**

Thunder was short today with only a bare eleven taking the field. But All Saints were shorter with only nine! Our strategy was to play solid in the first half to wear them down and then go for it in the second. But to their credit All Saints played out of their skins and didn't appear to tire in the second half like we were expecting – maybe they're used to playing short... And the Thunders played as they usually do when not under pressure – a step down from what they're capable of. On today's play, if All Saints had eleven we could have been in trouble.

Despite a slowish start for the Thunders, MEL D'ARCHY opened proceedings at 3 minutes of play by putting away a pass from ANNALESE SMITH from the left of the box. A further 12 minutes CHLOE PICCOLO found the net and a further 7 minutes EVE WILCOX centred a ball for ANNALESE to slot home. It was not all Thunder's way however, with the All Saints mids and strikers shaking off our markers all too often. Towards the end of the first half our marking tightened up and it was looking much safer.

VANESSA KRASSTEV just continues to improve week by week and is heading the ball and winning one-on-ones regularly. She almost scored again today and that just shows what perseverance and increasing confidence can do. And CLAIRE BUSHROD topped off a positive game by also almost scoring. It will come. MEL D'ARCHY put in a full 80 minutes despite ongoing injury problems, and was always involved up front. MADDY BROWN continued her good, solid form with a great match punctuated by some boomer kicks towards to goals.

EVE WILCOX wasn't feeling too good but still put in the full 80 minutes, figuring in the Thunder attack. ANNALESE continued with her trade-mark steam-rolling through the opposition defences, figuring in many of our goals as set-up, finisher or both. COURTNEY BLANCH was her usual enthusiastic self and nailed many an All Saints attack before it became dangerous. And anything that got through saw ARIELLE O'NEILL cutting across field to take the ball with the cry of "Ari!" on the way.... in other words "step aside, here comes Phar Lap!" FIONA SPARKES didn't need to do much in goals and swapped into striker for the second half.

Well the grand plan came unstuck a bit in the second half as All Saints didn't seem to tire and at times Thunder did. FIONA made her presence felt by firing a through ball to MEL to put away after 7 minutes. Then there was a drought till ANNALESE nailed a centre from MEL in the 26th minute. The final goal was from a blatant off side in lead-up, missed by the otherwise very competent ref – but we'll accept it anyway.

This win maintains our second place in the Championship round robin behind Saints United on goal difference, courtesy of Saints' 9-nil drubbing of Penno the previous week. Next week is our chance to gain top spot as we will indeed be versing Saints – should be a ripper of a match and the Thunders will need to be in their very best form!

#### **AA6 THORNLEIGH 4 vs. EASTWOOD ST ANDREWS 2**

This was a must win game for both teams. Our opponents were looking for top four survival and we were looking to stay in the premiership hunt after last week's atrocities. We were looking like the walking wounded with many players carrying injuries to ankles, knees, groins, shoulders and even a broken nose but the fact we came out on top showed just what the Thunder boys are made of. Things did not get off to a good start with our opponents scoring in only the 4th minute it looked like a case of "oh no, not again". Then GREG RUSTON had to come off with what can only be described as an extra hole on his face but bit by bit, things improved throughout the first half. Despite finally looking like turning things around we were still down at the break and with still plenty left to do. The match exploded into life in the second half as the Thunder of old was back. In the 48th minute DAVE POWER celebrated his birthday in style with a wonder strike to put us level. The ball laid tastily on a plate by PAT CHAPMAN for Dave to pummel into the net. We went a head in the 51st minute when a patched up GREG "The Ironman" RUSTON put a trademark free kick onto the back post where it was met by RICHARD HULOWATYI who headed it down and home. It was a classic Thunder goal, the old combination, er... combining again. Much to our annoyance our opponents got level again a minute later letting us know the game was a long way from over. We went ahead again five minutes later when TIM MORISON hooked one over the keeper after a touch in the air from PAT CHAPMAN. So now it was 3-2 and there was still half an hour to go! What a treat for those in the grandstand! Things calmed down a little after that but it was still a frenetic match that went end to end. Our victory was sealed in the 78th minute when AARON BOOTH was put into space by... yes you guessed it PAT CHAPMAN. He could have taken it around the keeper but instead he shot from the top of the box putting it over the keeper in what is possibly a contender for goal of the year. For a man who normally saves his goals for grand finals it was awfully pretty. We managed to soak up everything they threw at us for the closing stages and they threw a lot but we

threw back just as hard. The Three Andrews (wasn't that a Chevy Chase movie?) LISCOE, BOUGHTON and WAGG all had chances late on but were unsuccessful, somewhat comically for one of them. Damn those pesky snipers. So we ended up 4-2 winners after turning the game around at half time. Apart from those mentioned there were also great games from keeper MARK DENNIS, JAMES RODGER and BENTON JOHNSON in defence, MARK KENNEDY in the midfield and superb cameos from the still injured ROSS EDWARDS and NICK CHAPMAN. It showed the boys still have what it takes to go all the way again. One more win and we will. One point separates first and second. It's a winner take all match next week. Pain is temporary. Glory is forever.

#### **AAW10 THORNLEIGH 0 vs. Normanhurst 0**

Thornleigh were a little slow off the blocks today as were Normanhurst. The game seemed to travel at quite a slow pace with no real outstanding speed or world cup winning moves. SWEEPER seemed to be playing a one man defensive team and proved just why she is the only SWEEPER in the team. The sideline held their breath as Normanhurst had one big strike at goal however STAR was able to tap it with both hands just in time to save it. Lucky for STAR as it made up for the rest of her slow play. Running with a head clod proved difficult so it was lucky the defensive line of PUP, SOPH, JO JO, CHIPPA, PANDA and SWEEPER were able to let STAR rest with cold and flu tablets in goals. By the end of first half it was nil all. Second half Thornleigh started to pick up their game. MADDOG was playing rugby league down the sidelines as her player tackled her to the ground. The judges gave the graceful commando roll a 9.5. PADDY came out of nowhere to support POPCORN in the forwards and on a few occasions had a couple of strikes at goal. BROOKSY also was up there in the mids getting involved in the action. FORREST pulled herself back to mids to help out the backs and BLUE also had to drop down to help out. Even though the game seemed to just potter along Thornleigh as always was able to have fun and have a laugh. The Normanhurst side were a great team to play against and everyone on the field had fun. Nil all draw by the end of the game but a nice run around in the sunshine. Special thanks for Kevin "FORRESTS DAD" for his cameo appearance as REFEREE and to the large crowd we had for support, your encouragement and support is always appreciated. Coaches player went to SWEEPER and was well earned.

#### **AA/14 THORNLEIGH 3 vs. Beecroft 1**

This was another good win against a gallant but depleted young Beecroft team, our game was on Sunday morning at 9.00am at Cheltenham Oval and for those that have not the pleasure of playing at Cheltenham Oval on a cold morning playing on a pitch that does not have a blade of grass on it you have missed absolutely nothing.

The team turned up bleary eyed and with a few players suffering hang over's and a couple still feeling the effects of a big Saturday night and it took a while to get the team warmed up and onto the pitch, Beecroft could only field 10 players and we had 4 reserves (and we needed that many) so we knew that we could outlast the opposition over the 90 minutes.

The game started at a good pace and it soon became obvious that despite some of our players condition we were dominating Beecroft and we pressured the goal mouth and just missed with a few early chances, we were camped inside the opposition half when PAUL received a ball about 30 meters

out and hit a screamer that went into the top right hand corner. One up to us and we were looking good, it did not take too much longer when we were again on the score board when a great run in by DAVE who hit a cracker of a shot that was parried away by the keeper only to fall at the feet of STEVE who was following up to bang it home.

We came in at half time two nil up and feeling pretty good about ourselves but we needed to continue to play good football in the second half as Beecroft are a good team on the counter attack and can score from anywhere on the field, we conceded a penalty through an accidental hand ball in the box which Beecroft converted and this gave them a real lift and they came at us from every angle and some desperate defending was needed to keep them out.

We scored again as another cross from DAVE went across the goal mouth and found ANDY out wide who put away a nice goal, we continued to play some good football till the end of the game and came away with a well deserved win.

DAVE, JORDAN and ANDY played some of their best football today

A big thank you to KEL GIBBONS from the 18 / 1 team for helping us out and to STEVE and MICHAEL GAMBLE for coming along to referee and assistant referee for us.