

Round 1 – 2004

Barnstoneworth had a disastrous opening day of the 2004 season. On a bleak day the Division 1 side was educated by the Kinross students to the tune of 5-1. It could be said that Barnies are quick learners because the halftime score was 4-0.

The second half could easily have been won by the Red & Whites but for a close offside call. The ball was in the net but the flag was up.

Barnies keeper Ewan Powell was trying his hand in the fire pit of A Division. It could only be said that he had a shocker.

There has been much said recently about the behaviour of the fans of AFL's Richmond, particularly in regards to spitting. The Barnstoneworth name is synonymous with extremes. The Barnie Army found the outer limits when, by halftime, they had managed to fill the Gatorade bucket with their salivations and tipped this over the out of sorts Powell. An investigation is sure to follow.

Manager Warwick Baines agreed it was not a good day for Powell. "Players can have bad days and as they go his was up there, but no-one deserves what he got."

If this was not enough, the Army were inspired by Easter and a recent movie and crucified Powell on the crossbar. In a twist from the Easter story it is likely that Powell will not be seen until at least Pentecost.

Other news from the famous club sees that Sid Grindley was upset at losing his tag of oldest club player. It caused him to move from the ease of Over 35's into A Division so he could at least be the only player over 50 in that Barnies team.

Mick Jessop, making his debut, is the player who took Sid's venerable mantle and used it to great effect even though Barnies Over 35's went down in their local derby with Waratahs. The score was closer at 3-2 but it did nothing to lessen the blow for the fans.

Over 35's competition was making its Orange debut on Saturday and many thought it was a tailor made competition for Barnies. Waratahs had other ideas and spoilt the party. It remains to be seen how Barnies respond to the challenge laid down by 'tahs.

Round 2 – 2004

Long term faithful of the phenomenon that is Barnstoneworth will recognise the economy of truth that is utilised in reporting on the illustrious Red & Whites. It may also be called a devotion to licence.

Whatever name is given there is a fine line that is trod each week during the winter months. Last week the line was crossed.

There are a number of status symbols that are held dear in sport. World titles, gold medals, world records... One such title that is arguably without peer throughout the sporting world is that given to Barnstoneworth's oldest player and the coveted No. 2 jersey.

We must now apologise to Phil 'The Hitman' Jackson who held the honour from the premature retirement of Rob Emmerson in 2002 until the debut game in 2004 of Mick Jessop. It was mistakenly reported that Sid Grindley held this title and it is now important to correct this travesty of truth.

This scribe will happily forfeit his life if Mr Jackson does not accept this retraction but we do ask that one's family will be left alone.

In the hope that we will be able to continue drawing breath we now move on to the weekend's performances.

Barnstoneworth v Canobolas Rangers always attracts a great rivalry and brings out the best in Barnies. This week was no exception with the Over 35's Red & Whites having a well-earned 3-1 win over Rangers while the Division 1 side played with distinction to go down 0-1 to the reigning premiers.

With no great fanfare Barnies then claim the day on aggregate and win the coveted SFA Cup.

The over 35 boys did struggle to overcome a superstition that said that one of four players would be sent from the field in the first 10 minutes. To remedy this the players in question refused to take the field in this time and Barnies started with ten to avoid finishing with ten.

Rangers took the opportunity to go 1 up but when balance was restored Barnies worked methodically to graft out a well deserved win. The highlight of the day must surely be the call from Rod 'Grub' Madden of "Grub;s up". After initial salivation this you realised was a call to clear the way unless you felt your head was no longer important.

One win from four games is not good but at least this week there were encouraging signs that things are on the way up. We can only hope that it is not the grub on its way back up.

Round 3 2004

Fans of Barnstoneworth have been regularly accosted by the scandals surrounding the club. It seems a respite is called for so this week we will profile one of the club stalwarts.

Phil Hodges was born in 1923, essentially nine months after the famous premiership title of 1922. His full name is too long to print but ask the Barnie Army to recite the eleven players of that title and you'll be well on your way.

Phil started life as a child prodigy. Surprisingly it was not soccer that he was known for but tap dancing. Many believe it is this background that gave him the balance and dexterity for which we know him now.

After a prolonged adolescence that could be best explained by Peter, his third cousin twice removed on the Pan side of the family, Phil finally emerged into the 1980 Bloomfield Eagles. This is the feeder side for the Red & Whites.

Phil enjoyed a number of years of success punctuated by the wild excesses associated with celebrities of the time. After celebrating the 1988 final victory Phil decided to walk home because he couldn't find his car. Sadly he couldn't find his house either and spent the night at the bottom of an embankment.

It was some days later that Phil realized he had lost his personality. When searches proved fruitless Phil knew the only choice available now was to become an accountant.

In 1998 Phil decided it was time to return to the field and rejoin Barnies. He has had some success in that time.

So we come to the present where we find Phil standing in goal on Saturday against All Saints in the Over 35 competition. Phil tested out his injured ribs by blocking shots with his chest. He basically withstood the test but allowed in three goals. Thankfully Barnies managed to slot away five goals of their own.

The Division 1 side travelled to Blayney to take on the Bulldogs. It was a tense struggle with the ball going back and forth in the midfield. Both sides proved solid at the back and there were a few half chances.

The deadlock was finally broken with five minutes to go. The Barnie Army had been hoping to end the run of losses and were hopeful until a header was blocked but not hung onto. The Bulldogs fell on the scraps and took the match 1-0.

Barnies have a home double header next week in local derbies against Waratahs. This is a big week in the Red & White calendar.

Round 13 – 2004

The highs and lows of Barnstoneworth have been in evidence again recently. The big news was the club being selected to represent Australia in the demonstration sport of Musical Soccer at the upcoming Olympics.

The sport is not widely known and involves a precision of teamwork that is regularly seen in Barnies play. Thankfully it doesn't necessarily involve scoring goals which allows the Red & Whites a chance to excel.

The downside was the panic when the club received a tip off that the Anti-Doping Agency was coming to test the players. Firstly there were some who misunderstood and spent a panicky 48 hours brushing up on their general knowledge.

For those who knew what was happening it meant a hurried check on what substances are banned. The results of their tests proved to be clear for banned substances but apparently Australian National University researchers have booked the team in after the games to study the effects of the various things found in the players systems.

They are not necessarily interested in the players with a blood alcohol level of 0.52 but are keen to study the effects a blood-gold level of 0.06. They are also interested in the player who in fact had no traceable blood but appeared to run on liquid helium. The voice was apparently the big sign there.

With the testing done the players could then focus on the weekend games. The Over 35's were taking on their bogey team of The Saints while the A Division lads met CYMS Carinya at Brabham.

It was hoped that the Over 35's would have the advantage of their first game against The Saints at Stadium Barnstoneworth. It started badly with Saints getting an early goal. The Barnie Army was in full swing when Paul Hopkins managed to latch onto a ball and level the scores.

Midway through the second half the stands erupted when Eric Jacobs pressured Saints keeper Crawford Lindsay after Bruce Middleton had put in a great ball which ultimately found the goal.

Lindsay recovered his poise and pulled off some great saves which allowed Saints to stay in the match. Two late goals from the right saw The Saints victorious again and gives them confidence in the run up to the finals. Both teams are hoping still to make the semis and there is every chance they will.

Meanwhile at Brabham, Barnies put in a great defensive display that saw them hang on to their lead after Donnie Jacobs was brought down in the box. Rod Lambert in goal was leaping and diving and keeping almost everything out. Those he was unable to get were cleared off the line by the reliable backs.

Many believe the win was achieved as Warwick Baines unexplained absence saved them the trouble of trying to cover his weaknesses. There is speculation that Baines' contract will not be renewed next year.

Yet again it was the Good, the Bad & the Ugly with the emphasis on the UG. So its all systems go in the run up to the finals.

Grand Final Day 2004

Grand Final day and what could have been a day of celebration for Barnstoneworth United Football Club. It wasn't to be and Waratahs ran out 5-2 victors in the Over 35s division.

With the ever-mobile Stadium Barnstoneworth being hastily reconstructed to cope with the vast crowd, the Barnie Army was bolstered by their truly international ranks. Moving through the army one could pick out the Irish, Scottish, English and even German accents.

The normally vociferous Barnie Army was doubly so and the singing rather more in tune than is usual. It was a spectacle for the capacity crowd with standing room only available as every ticket for the match was sold out.

The game started badly for the Red & Whites with some typical defensive lapses leading to two early Waratah goals. Darren Sinclair managed to overcome various leg injuries to slot home the second.

It was looking even bleaker when Waratahs were awarded a dubious penalty. Terry Gallard stepped up to the mark and it was stopped. Keeper Powell was heard to let Gallard know "That's twice!". Terry slunk back to the relative sanctuary of midfield, from which he had a blinder. He was rewarded with the final blow to sink Barnies hopes.

Down 2-0 at half time the army was subdued. Comparisons were made with the 1935 side and there was little difference except that all modern players were wearing their shorts.

There was some intense discussion as to the prospects of playing shorts-less. It was thought this tactic would win the game but finally sanity prevailed as the definition of winning ugly did not want to be rewritten.

It was decided to try skill and so it was left to Eric Jacobs with assistance from Mick Carpenter to get the first goal back. The Army was up, dancing and singing, cart wheeling and rolling. There was still a chance.

'Tahs got another from a cross soon after but when Jacobs bagged his second to again bring Barnies within one the game got more tense. There was fear that the stands would collapse when the Red & Whites were awarded a penalty of their own soon after. The celebrations were short lived as the decision was overturned for what many thought was a doubtful offside.

At 3-3 it could have been a far different ball game. For a few different decisions it could have been a very different ball game but in the end Waratahs took their chances and were deserved winners especially as they have been competition front runners all year.

There was some talk that Matt Bevan would not own up to his goal, as it was a rather pathetic effort that barely dribbled over the line. As time goes by however it will be a grand 30m strike in a tense Grand Final and no one will argue otherwise.

At the end of the day it must be said that soccer was the winner. That was in no small part to the huge efforts of the Sydney element of the Barney Army and special thanks goes to Mick Frost and the boys. They made it memorable day for all at the ground, and those at the clubhouse after and those at various pubs around Orange for some time after, and no doubt for those on the train back home.