

MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY BASKETBALL CLUB

DRIBBLING BALLS

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QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY TOURNAMENT - PORTLAND.

MEN'S A GRADE.

A strong team of seven firsts boomed their way through the 3 preliminary games defeating Preston (2) 58-39, Warnambool 52-27 and Panthers 59-32. These games were good performances, especially the game against Preston's Div. 2 side which has defeated the full first side in Wednesday night competition. Graeme Clarke played an outstanding game which is good to see, since he has been receiving very little court time on Wednesdays. It was also good to see the even scoring by Haggis, Betty, Skippy and Graeme during the 3 first round games indicating some semblance of team play.

Being one of only two undefeated teams in A grade we approached the semi-final with a good deal of confidence, only to find ourself in a tooth and nail struggle against Asgard. This is an apt description of the game which was handled by two young referees who seemed to lose all control of the game, allowing many blatant fouls to pass unpenalized. This played right into Asgard's hands as they ran hard and scrapped even harder. Despite this we opened up a 26-20 lead late in the second half, however we never looked like holding it. Asgard pegged us back then went 32-30 ahead in the last minute. Our shooting, which had let us down badly in this game, did so once more as we blew our last chance to tie the game. All in all this was a typical Uni. performance against a team that ran and scrapped, and a disappointing end to our part of the tournament.

MEN'S B GRADE.

Coach Henry Cooper took charge of the second side and steered them through the preliminary round very impressively. Inspired by the brilliant all-round play of Neville Brayley we defeated Geelong Y.M.C.A. 49-35, Tec - Birds 52-39 and State College by 17. Mark Young's ball-handling was excellent as was Bruce Holland's defence, whilst the games of Steve Nolan and Gary Pendelburry showed what good potential they have, especially Gary who is developing into a reliable big - man.

In the semi-final Sunbury stayed close for the first 10 minutes, and in fact lead 9-8. Then Coops went the man-to-man and we were 23-12 up at half-time. With Alex leading the way in the second half we cleared out to win by twenty points and earn a place in the Grand Final.

The Grand Final saw us up against some very strong and classy opposition in Geelong Tigers, an A grade side in the Geelong Conference. They broke away to an early lead with good outside shooting and tight man-to-man defence, and held this until half-time. We came back strongly in the second half to get within 8 points but dropped back to 14 quickly. Neville fouled out with 8 minutes to go and we went 20 down. However, showing real "guts and determination" the remaining players closed the gap to 14 at the end, which was a good effort against a team whose closest game til them was 30 points.

To just say "Neville fouled out" would be a great injustice to him as he played one of the finest games you could ever want to see.

In three - quarters of a game he shot 25 points, took innumerable rebounds and was easily the best player on the court. The standing ovation he received was well deserved, as were the trophies he received as Most Valuable Player in the preliminary round, and M.V.P. in the finals.

WOMEN'S A GRADE.

The Women's side came up against some strong competition in A grade but were not disgraced in any way. They beat Panthers 44-19, and lost to Theo's meats 59-24, Geelong Y. 49-19 and Sungold 39-22. Carol ran well in each game and played some very strong basketball. Debbie rebounded well in both offence and defence and shot quite a few points, while Lois and Julie handled the ball well under pressure. Nobody who saw Julie shoot 12 point in one game will forget it in a hurry, as it was a great exhibition of dynamic, on the run shooting. Diane showed remarkable composure playing with the firsts for the first time and performed admirably as a forward.

WOMEN'S B GRADE.

This side was cancelled due to the lack of interest, and a "friendly chat" with the Tournament Disputes Tribunal. Janine and Trish played some good scratch games with a little help from some friends, but it's a long way to go to find you don't have enough team mates to field a team.

Off the court - there is no truth to the rumour that Debbie Lawrie is pregnant, nor is Henry Cooper an expectant father. However, we would like to know why Graeme Clarke's bed was not slept in after Sunday's 4.32. Perhaps he was counting steps.....