

Grand Final Results 2005-06

PREMIERS

Under 14 Metro League
Under 18 State League
2nd Nine

FINALISTS

Under 14 South East Centre
Under 18 Metro League
3rd Nine

John Viney Award

MVP in Grand Final - U18
Tom Ellis

2005-06 SPONSORS

Many thanks for Peak Potential and the South Oakleigh Club for their continued support of Cheltenham Baseball Club—please remember to support these wonderful businesses

The Peak Potential Team

As part of Peak Potential's community sponsorship programme, they have provided our club with a membership card that entitles players and families to receive their first \$200.00 worth of services at Peak Potential Health & Wellness Centres free of charge. For further information regarding Peak Potential's chiropractic care you can contact them on 9584 1308 or for your membership card contact Greg Blaskett on 9551 1457. Peak Potential recently moved into their new premises at 131 Lower Dandenong Road, Mentone.

South Oakleigh Club

1 Victor Road, East Bentleigh

Here's a snapshot of the benefits that can be enjoyed by members:

- 10% discount on drinks, meals and other special events (conditions apply)
- FREE function room hire
- Special Members' prices on take-away beer, wine and spirits
- A regular South Oakleigh Club Newsletter including specials and discounts
- Access to all Sporting and Recreational activities
- And lots more...



CHEL TENHAM BASEBALL CLUB INC

Summer Season
2005-2006



Under 18 State Rustlers
Grand Final Winners
2005-06

SENIOR PRESENTATION

Sunday, 9 April 2006



www.rustlers.org.au

President's Report

If you didn't enjoy the 2005-06 baseball season, where the bloody hell were you?!

This was a very successful season in a number of ways.

Tee-ball introduced about 48 new families of future baseballers to this great game and it always gives great pleasure to see many players, parents, coaches, scorers and team managers having fun on Saturday mornings. Colin Upfill has completed 10 years of tee-ball coaching and we are considering buying him a new helicopter hat in recognition.

Special thanks to Sue Felsenthal for starting the tee-ballers off at the beginning of the season and to Connie Upfill for taking over the reins mid-season and finishing the year on a high note. The tee-ballers acquitted themselves well during the annual tee-ball tournament and had great fun.

The four Under 12 and three Under 14 sides that played on Friday nights were again given great support by skilled coaches under the coordination of Peter Leslie and John Carlile. Thank you to these coaches and all the parents, scorers and team managers who allow these players to improve their skills.

The Under 12 State team acquitted themselves well during the season making the finals. Congratulations to three of these players, Adam Burdett, Yoshi Campitelli and Brett Curnow for making the Rubberball teams. The Under 12's represented the club well at the annual tournament during the year.

The Under 14 Metro team completed a great year with a come-from-behind brilliant win in the grand final. Well done players and congratulations to coach, Greg Blaskett. The Under 14 Cardinals had a great year to make the grand final.

Congratulations also to the Under 14 Victorian State Representatives, Daniel Farmer and Takashi Kobiashi.

The Under 16 teams were well represented this year with two Cheltenham teams and one combined Cheltenham Ormond-Glenhuntly team, which allowed more players to play each week. Thank you to the three coaches in this age group who made playing baseball a priority.

Congratulations to the Under 16 Victorian State representatives, John Blaskett, Kable Hogben and Nathan Aron who acquitted themselves well.

Thanks to John Davidson who took on the role of U16 Age Group Coordinator. John's son Kane hasn't played in the Under 16's for some years now, so many thanks for giving up your time and coordinating this age group.

5th Nine—Seniors

After one of our games, on the drive home with Glenn Farmer we were discussing stores (like Bunnings) where you always seemed to come out with more than was intended when you went in, we happened at that moment to pass the billboard for Sexyland...

So was the 5th's season, there was the expectation of enjoyment and spontaneous humour, but we came out richer and with more than we could have anticipated. We began the season as a group of dads with baseball kids, looking to stay fit and have a social game of sport, we finished as a competitive baseball team.

The main reason for the teams' existence was Cliff Corcoran, Cliff's enthusiasm to play infected the other guys and soon enough that normally unheard of action 'training' had commenced. When Cliff suddenly and tragically passed away it seemed to stiffen the resolve of the side and we went on to play in the finals and very nearly pinch the first semi.

There were many memorable moments through the season, but the one which more than any summed up what our team was all about, was Alan Ogilvie's first catch. As Alan rampaged around the outfield holding his trophy aloft, the opposition runners continued to scamper around the base paths. There was laughter, cheering, screaming and post match recriminations; and just so, our season continued on.

The team was not solely made up by inexperience, when we retained the services of highly paid import Mike (Many Beers) Cook (Mike had to be flown in for each game) we suddenly had a short stop and class hitter in the line up. Petie (Fluffy Beer) Burnett provided our pitching and Clean Up hitting; John (Injured Beer) Carlile was 1st base and lead off. James (Lite Beer) Upfill handled the catching and James (Notallowed a Beer) Brake patrolled the outfield.

We also picked up Clark (Little Beer) son of Cliff (Ten Beers) Corcoran. As the season rolled on Steve (More Beer) Campitelli made 3rd base his own, with some great plays; Alan (Angry Beer) Ogilvie went from strength to strength in the outfield after his inaugural fly ball, Ian (Just One more Beer) Curnow filled in spectacularly on a number of occasions (Not excluding his novel uniform of shorts and thongs) and Glenn (I'll just check with Leigh Beer) Farmer played everywhere and batted exceptionally.

Thank you to our platoon of scorers through the year, to Andrew and Peter Rizzi for your help, and our fantastic support from the sidelines from family and friends.

But most of all, thanks guys for a wonderful season. And Cliffy, good luck with your new club up there.

Colin Upfill

...4th Nine Seniors continued

Congratulations to Michael for pitching a shut out against Preston on the 30/10/05 and Thomas for his grand slam against Bonbeach on the 19/2/06.

James Upfill with great mirth has continually informed me that I'm the only Fitzgerald not to hit a grand slam this season, I guess in future I'll have bat behind Emily, thank god Christine doesn't play!

The season was tough on playing numbers quite often we had only 9 players, I regret that the 4ths could not help the 5ths more by rotating a player to them. I explained this to my player's, they understood and were committed to help the club and our fellow club members in the 5ths.

It is the above that makes it all worthwhile even though we had our battles, I still believe the kids could play it harder, concentrate more, stop making excuses and cease the chatter. Believe it or not I granted them some slack due to their age and the fact that most were playing were playing their 2nd game for the day. But I greatly respect your commitment to firstly to the club and secondly the team, for this you have my 100% support and thanks. It is this attitude that makes the club great, imagine what sort of club we would have if we were all selfish and only worried about our own performances or the performance of our own children. I have played with and seen parents with this attitude over the many years, they tend not to stay the course, are loathed by their peers and don't have my respect.

Thank you to all the parents for your support and making sure I had 9 players, my scorer Nicholas in his 3^d Season of scoring, great effort for a 12 year old. The umpires Sean Gabb, Michael Rizzi, Nick Rossell, Brad Heenan and anyone else I might have missed, a fantastic effort for the club.

Bruce Fitzgerald

The 2005/2006 Fourth's

Nathan Aron (1 Game)
James Brake (2 Games)
Peter Burdett
Peter Burnett (Prelim Final)
Tony Cevce
Ben Cooen
Trent Davidson
Will Felsenthal (2 Games)
Bruce Fitzgerald
Thomas Fitzgerald
Jarred Hall (1 Game)
Stuart Holland (1 Game)

Simon Middleton (1 Game)
Will Osborne
Dale Ravesi (1 Game)
Michael Rizzi
Nick Rossell
Steve Rossell (2 Games)
Clinton Thomson (1 Game)
John Vanderheiden
Trent Vanderheiden (5 Games)
Colin Upfill (Prelim Final)
James Upfill (3 Games)

Our Under 18 teams had a stellar year. Under the coaching of Kevin Williams, the State team completed a brilliant year with a gutsy grand final win to make it back-to-back grand finals. Kevin took up this important role, gave it his full commitment and the team responded accordingly. The team was well represented by Victorian State players Tom Ellis and Andrew Gribbin, and Victorian Provincial players, Andrew Adams, Justin D'Rozario, Blake Cunningham, Russell Ferguson, Ben Ford, Karl Mackay and Josh Mulherin.

Mick Trevorah did a sterling job to get the Metro team into the grand final. His time and commitment to this team was exceptional and all players improved during the year.

Thanks to John Ferguson for being Under 18 Coordinator amongst his other numerous roles.

The club introduced a fifth senior side this year to enable more juniors to play senior baseball and to encourage parents of junior players to join in the fun. This proved to be a successful move and I hope that all the new "old" players enjoyed their year. I would like to personally thank Colin Upfill for taking on the daunting role of Manager of the 5th's and Bruce Fitzgerald for agreeing to manage and coach the 4th's.

All five senior sides made the finals – a magnificent result – with the 2nd's and 3rd's progressing to the grand final. Thanks to Mick Trevorah for coaching the 3rd's to a very good year—a good double Mick.

The 2nd's, under the coaching of Matt Coppens, finished a great year with a huge win in the grand final. Most of the players came from the juniors and several played in two grand finals. Well done Matt for a solid performance.

The 1st's had a fluctuating year but finished strongly to make the finals. They were ably coached by Matt Gourlay with the support of assistant coach, Anthony Reinke. Thanks for a job well done. Many junior players were introduced to this team during the year and learned from great coaching.

Off the field, there are some special thanks you's.

Thanks to John Carlile for initiating and coordinating the three junior family nights which were extremely successful and enjoyed by everyone who attended. Hopefully the success of these nights will continue next year and will be encompassed by the whole club. Thanks also to Peter Katz for his contribution to the success of these nights, especially in obtaining the encouragement awards and coordinating the catering side of the evenings.

The Board of Management Cadetship program was introduced at the beginning of summer by Greg Blaskett. This has proved very successful with a number of our junior players participating. It is a very worthy program and all juniors should be encouraged to participate.

Thanks to Sue Felsenthal for organising and running two umpiring courses during the year where several players learned the fundamentals of umpiring. Thanks to Sue for also getting the Rustlers website up and running – log on and enjoy www.rustlers.org.au

Thanks to the people who turned up for the recent working bee and helped spruce up the grounds.

Thanks to all the helpers in the canteen during the year – especially Chris and Scott Cunningham, Karen Ellis, Connie Upfill and Sue Felsenthal.

A special thank you to John Ferguson for stepping into the unenviable role of Chairman of Selectors (five out of five teams in finals speaks for itself), as well as organising the grounds, along with his son Russell, week in and week out, and maintaining the baseball equipment in top condition.

Thanks to Chris Cunningham and Di Adams for providing the uniforms throughout the year.

Thanks to Mick Trevorah for arranging for Terry Reid to run a "coach the coaches" session – a great initiative.

Once again, Tina Cooen should be thanked for coordinating the Rubberball lunches for visitors and officials. Tina has done this job for a number of years now and every year her lunches just get better and better.

Congratulations to Tom Ellis and Andrew Gribbin on being signed by the Mariners and Padres respectively. We wish them well in their overseas endeavours.

Congratulations to the following players selected for the Victorian Institute of Sport Academy: Josh Mulherin, Karl Mackay, John Blaskett, Justin D'Rozario, Kable Hogben, Tom Ellis, Andrew Gribbin.

Personal thanks to my hard working fellow committee members for a job done well under sometimes trying circumstances.

In closing, I encourage you all to help in the best way you can to allow as many people as possible to enjoy baseball at Cheltenham Baseball Club "our club".

Be involved! Play ball!

Kevin Adams
PRESIDENT

4th Nine—Seniors

The Fourths finished 3rd after the home and away season, this was indicative of our playing performance for the year, with us losing only one game (Mulgrave) that I believe we should have won.

The side was in a slump after Christmas but we worked through it and were starting to get better and better with each game leading up to the finals. This improvement continued during the finals. Our loss to Doncaster (eventual premiers) by a run in the prelim can only be described as a lost opportunity, the best side did not win the game.

The lessons from this loss are as follows:-

- Do not make silly base running errors as they cost us runs.
- When the pressure is on remember to play simple baseball get in the right position, field the ball and make the outs, hang tough and keep your side in the game. There is an old saying that defence wins you finals.
- Do not listen to the crowd and do not react to it, profanity is totally unacceptable and it tells me that you are not concentrating nor have the temperament to handle the pressure.
- The coach erred when taking one of the better hitters out when 8 runs up, thinking the 10 run rule was about to be enforced. Happy with my decision to bring John and Thomas in as they deserved to play, however list management should have been better.

Don't think for one moment we did not play well—we hit the ball and made some great plays. Once Tony hurt his back prior to the finals and could not pitch anymore I decided to move him to the outfield and improve our outfield range, as we were playing against older and more powerful sides, 4 catches in the prelim justifies this decision. Another big turnabout from the last time we played Doncaster in which they defeated us by 18 runs to nil was to be patient, let the ball come to us, and not being afraid of batting with 2 strikes on us.

Another Finals highlight was the hitting of Ben, batting 800 during the finals, see what happens when you have a crack, pure hitters should never pass up the opportunity to score runs, I'm hopeful this is the turning point for your batting.

Peter Burnett pitched a great game, he was only in the game once I found out my starting pitcher Nick Rossell, who was improving with each outing, had hurt his arm and could not throw on the morning of the game.

Peter Burdett (not to be confused with the above) was a great assistance once he committed to the side, with a young pitching staff an experience catcher was invaluable, I hope you all learnt from him. Peter would not let us down whenever he was required to play due to shortage of numbers.

John Vanderheiden was a great moral support to me throughout the season, his decision to play meant we had 9 players and just having an adult with me was a great relief.

3rd Nine—Seniors

Our Third Nine consisted of players from the Under 16 and Under 18 program, and a couple of seniors playing on a regular basis.

Our record at the end of the Home and Away season stood at 14 wins, 3 losses and 1 draw (a game cancelled due to excessive heat).

This put us 2 1/2 games clear of Mulgrave in second, and clearly the best percentage overall. However our runs “for” was the 5th best in our Division, but our defense stood tall all year.

A hard fought win against the Rebels 4-3 in the second semi enabled us to play against Moorabbin in the Grand Final. After two completed innings we held a 1-0 lead, but the Panthers bats created some havoc, combined with the toil of the day earlier for some of the players, the more experienced opposition took the honours on the day.

Sadly, the score didn't reflect the effort of the whole season, but the 23 players used throughout the season gained valuable experience.

Thanks to all of those who assisted with umpiring and scoring duties (mainly Janette Holland).

Well done to all award winners.

Keep working on your skills and practice good habits.

Michael Trevorah
Coach

Chairman of Selectors Report

Cheltenham fielded 5 senior sides and had 60 players on our Senior List - 35 of these players also played in our junior teams. The Under 18 players in particular shouldered a heavy load and took on key roles in our top teams. Our junior players all performed well and their senior experience has clearly accelerated their improvement.

At full strength our Firsts were comparable to any team in the competition but player commitments overseas and to other sports led to many changes and an unsettled side. Consequently players were sometimes called upon to play in positions and teams to help the club and their cooperation and commitment was much appreciated. In particular, Kane Davidson and Josh Mulherin were promoted to cover absences in the First's Semi Final and missed the chance to play in the Seconds Premiership after a season where they were instrumental in their team finishing on top of the ladder and making the Grand Final. Brad Heenan also played a pivotal role in pitching the Thirds to a place in the Grand Final.

Player movement between teams was a major focus of the Selection Panel this season and many players had opportunities to perform at higher levels and in different positions. This policy was successful and needs to continue as places in teams are made subject to increasing competition. It should always be harder to hold your place in a team than it is to win it in the first place.

Practice attendance and our work ethic have improved markedly under Matt Gourlay but further improvement is needed if Cheltenham is to become a permanent Division 1 Club. Fitness and strength is essential to complement baseball skills and this was best demonstrated by Andrew Adams pitching performance in the Seconds Grand Final (after playing in the U18 Grand Final that morning) where he dominated the Mulgrave hitters in very hot (36 deg) conditions.

Team managers comprise the Selection Panel (Firsts to U16 State) and our Club is very fortunate to have people in those roles who can balance Club and individual player interests. Thank you for a job well done.

John Ferguson



Vale Stan Hogben

It was with much sadness that we learned of the passing of Stanley Hogben on 16 January 2006.

Stan had a very long association with the club, starting his illustrious baseball career in 1954 and quickly became an "A" Grade player as a pitcher and at first base.

Stan's commitment and dedication to Cheltenham Baseball Club saw him being nominated and elected a Life Member in 1984.

Stan was an inaugural member of the Board, he held the position of Vice President of the Board in 1986, and in 1987 he took the role as Acting President before resuming his position again as Vice President from 1988 to 1992. Then from 1993 he was a committee member of the Board for a few years.

Another love of Stan's was being able to watch his son and grandson develop a passion for baseball and go on and play for his beloved club. He was extremely proud when his son, Trevor, was elected a Life Member in 1992. When his grandson, Kable, was chosen to represent Victoria in the U16 Victorian State Team in 2006, Stan had much pleasure in showing the nursing staff and any of his visitors a photo of Kable in his State uniform—a very proud grandfather.

Stan Hogben will be remembered by club members as a talented, determined and hardworking clubman.



2nd Nine—Seniors

Division 2 Reserves 2005-2006 - Premiers

Firstly I'd like to thank Matt Gourlay, Mick Trevorah, Bruce Fitzgerald and Colin Upfill as coaches of the other senior sides. To have all 5 sides in finals is a great achievement for our young playing group and all players, coaches and parents should be proud of their efforts.

Thank you to John Ferguson for your work as Chairman of Selectors, help on match days and all round baseball experience and knowledge. I also need to thank Steve Babidge for helping look after the team when I was unavailable at the beginning of the season.

Thank you to my scorers throughout the season – Di Adams and Sharnie Mulherin. And thank you to Steve Gourlay and Russell Ferguson for their help coaching bases throughout the season. Most weeks we would play without a bench and having players from the Firsts help out without being asked shows great club spirit.

And finally thank you to my team – **Premiers!**

It has taken me eight long seasons to taste success in the VBA at senior level and it has been worth the wait.

To the guys who toiled week in week out: Karl Mackay, Kane Davidson, Andrew Adams, Josh Mulherin, Blake Cunningham, Ben Macquire and John Blaskett – congratulations. This team lost only 1 game all season – and did so in defensive style conceding a miserly 3 runs per game. And also to Ben Wenke who played through obvious pain to ensure that we had nine players each week.

It was a pleasure to coach this young side who trained hard, played hard and consistently pushed their personal boundaries to become better players.

Once again congratulations and I look forward to 2006-2007 with much optimism and enthusiasm.

Matthew Coppens
Coach

1st Nine—Seniors

We came into the season with some high expectations.

Playing in Division 2, recruiting four quality players and the continuing improvement of our home grown players.

The talk of finals was circulating! But... after 8 rounds and a record of 2 wins, 1 draw and 5 losses (4 consecutive) we had to re-evaluate.

With a better work ethic at training and pitching lead by Andrew Gribbin, Tom Ellis and Adam Blackley we began to play high quality and consistent baseball. We went into the Christmas break with 6 wins, 1 draw and 6 losses. After the break we had 5 wins, 2 losses and a draw. 11 wins, 8 losses and 2 draws - not bad considering the start. Good enough to finish 3rd.

Finals!!! We played Sandringham at Altona. We had beaten Sandringham all three games this year so confidence was high. Unfortunately Andrew Gribbin and Adam Blackley had to go to America and Tom Ellis had Under 18 commitments. That meant Josh Mulherin would start the game. What an effort. 6 quality innings. He was backed up equally as good by Adam Irons. Unfortunately we lost 3 to 2. A great effort considering the circumstances.

I would like to thank all the players for their efforts this year. John Ferguson for his work as Chairman of Selectors, Michael Gourlay for scoring and Matt Coppens for his role as 2nd's Coach.

Matthew Gourlay
Club Coach

Vale Cliff Corcoran

By Colin Upfill

I was honoured when Jackie asked me to speak of Cliff on behalf of the Cheltenham Baseball Club, and I know there is a large group of Club members who have enjoyed Cliff's gentle wit, his eagerness to assist in all the facets on and off the field, *however* for me and I'm sure for all of us in the team, Cliff above all, epitomised the 5th's.

His energy and enthusiasm, his love of the game, his camaraderie, and win or lose, the evenness of his temperament.

We were made aware (after the Blackburn game) that Cliff was appearing on the unavailable list from the chairman of selectors, and, (after some thoughtful drinking) we agreed this to be true, he is unavailable, however what is also true is that he *should* be there, on the list, for his spirit still runs through our team.

So when we talk of 'Ten Beers' it is the remembrance of mates, it is from the heart.

My years in team sport have taught me at least one thing, ... that true character will be revealed. Cliff Corcoran proved to be a man of integrity, high ideals, humour and compassion. He was also the loving and proud father of his sons Tyler and Clark, in his last game, against Upwey, he was glowing when Clark got the hit to start a rally which won the game and ensured the team a finals berth.

It is the sum of these attributes, and Cliff's celebration of small victories, which brought to my mind a treasured note from a friend long, long ago, she wrote:

'And in the sweetness of friendship
let there be laughter, and sharing of pleasure.
For in the dew of little things
the heart finds its morning and is refreshed.'

Take care my friend
Love and peace to you always.

Under 16 Coordinator's Report

This year Cheltenham fielded three teams in Under 16 2005-2006 Summer season.

All three teams were young with lots of talent unfolding. Of these teams we had one State League and two Metro teams.

At the start of the season Cheltenham had too many players for two teams and not quite enough for three, so with the help of Kevin Adams contacting Ormond Glenhantly we were able to form a combined team with Cheltenham and Ormond/Glenhantly players called the COG's.

Congratulations to all of the players for your efforts and team spirit. Well done guys! We hope you enjoyed your games and continue playing ball.

A big thank you to our three Coaches, Trevor Hogben, Bruce Fitzgerald and Colin Uffill. Thanks also to the players, parents, helpers and supporters. The season wouldn't happen without your help and support each week.

Congratulations to Nathan Aron, John Blaskett and Kable Hogben who all made the Under 16 State side.

Congratulations also to the boys who made VIS, Kable Hogben and John Blaskett.

GO CHELTENHAM!!!

Regards

John Davidson

Under 18 Metro

Runners-up 2005/2006 Season

I'd like to first of all thank our scorers, Janine Rizzi and Erica Grierson (on the odd occasion) for their assistance, and to the umpiring pool of Alan G, Lawrie, Peter and Alan T. Thanks to Lawrie for looking after the side against Williamstown/Port Melbourne.

The team also appreciates the effort of John V in line marking, and to all the parents -thanks for all your support.

Our team was extremely consistent throughout the year behind the pitching of Dale, and finished the regular season in second spot.

After the draw against Blackburn in the Home and Away season, the boys fought out a 6-2 win in the second semi in wet conditions. However the result was turned around 5-4 in the Grand Final in a game that could have gone either way.

We wish all those who have finished their junior career all the best in seniors.

Congratulations to all award winners.

Yours in baseball,
Michael Trevorah
Coach

We went into extra innings. At the top of the 8th with the go ahead run Tim O'Neill on 2nd, Russell Ferguson hit what appeared to be a double down the left field line only to be called foul by mm. Luck did not appear to be going our way. Tom had 10 pitches left to get rid of the next 3 hitters at the bottom of the 8th, which he did. Great effort.

Both pitchers were now out due to pitch counts and it was up to the relievers. The Geelong reliever loaded the bases with walks & was changed. A squeeze bunt by Ben Ford went foul by the smallest of margins and we ended up with 1 down with Tom Ellis up to bat. Tom hit down the rightfield line in a disciplined effort for a natural pull hitter, resulting in the go ahead run in JD. He is a great hitter in these situations. The coach called for the squeeze again and this time it resulted in an inning ending double play. (Live and die by the sword). Still we had scored the go ahead run but had no safety margin.

With our usual "Fireman" Ferg in relief, he struck out the leader and walked Biddle (not a bad thing). A ground out got us to 2 out but with the tying run now on 2nd. The next hit was down the middle and appeared to be going all the way to centrefield to score the tying run, but Blake Cunningham had other ideas. Steaming over towards 2nd base and making a great pick up, he gunned the throw to Andrew Adams at 1st and Chelt were State champs.

In the end our depth was better. Where the Geelong bottom 4 failed to score a run, had 1 hit and 4 strike outs, ours scored 3 times, 1 strike out and 5 hits.

Hits: Tim O'Neill 3, Russell Ferguson, Justin D'Rozario, Andrew Adams, Ben Ford, Tom Ellis and Blake Cunningham all 1 each.

Special mention to No.9 Tim O'Neill, the only player in the team not to represent Chelt at the U18 Australian Championships, struggled with the bat for most of the season, but got 3 in the GF including an RBI and scoring himself. Gutsy effort after his start. Tim never missed a practice.

Thanks to John Blaskett, Kable Hogben and Nick Rossell for being on our bench during the finals with little or no hope of a start and our Club Coach Matt Gourlay. Matt always made sure we had the pitching we needed to do the job through the year and for looking after 1st base coaching duties brilliantly during the finals. Matt bleeds Rustler blood no question.

Kevin Williams

Under 18 Coordinator's Report

Cheltenham had 20 players for our State and Metro teams this season and we finished State Champions and Runners up by the narrowest of margins. By any measure an outstanding performance especially when most of the other clubs struggle to fill a side or put committed players on the park. Cheltenham has established it self as the benchmark for U18 excellence and all involved should be proud of their achievements.

Players, scorers, parents, umpires and the managers (Kevin Williams and Michael Trevorah) are all to be congratulated. Can I especially put on record the Club's thanks to Al Gribbin for his umpiring behind the plated for this and recent seasons. He has worn many foul tips that would have hurt (90mph fast balls hurt a lot) without complaint and his fairness and sportsmanship were always of the highest standard.

Performances of our State team over the past 2 seasons have been simply outstanding and their only worthy opponent has been Geelong who has lost each time it really counted due to their lack of depth and persistence.

Reds manager, Sparky Anderson once said of Pete Rose, " He can't hit, he can't run, he can't throw and he can't field – and he is the best player we have got!".

I can't help thinking our players fall under this classification. State selectors may not consider our players to be the best players in Victoria, but they have consistently and comprehensively out performed the players in all the other teams and they clearly deserve more recognition.

Special recognition also needs to be given to Tom Ellis for his second MVP award for his performance in the State Grand Final – absolutely brilliant.

John Ferguson

Under 16 State Rustlers

...U18 State Rustlers continued

This season we started out as reigning premiers and all the pressure that comes with it. The opposition teams would be putting their best 9 against us each week.

We had a great start to the season, winning our first two games, but then we then lost our next five games, including two games by one run and one game by two runs. While all this was happening we had players trying out for state and provincial under 16 teams. Three players were successful:

**Nathan Aron
John Blaskett
Kable Hogben**

All made the State Side. Congratulations again to those three and to all who tried out, try again next year.

We managed to turn our season around, firstly beating Werribee 28-0 and then Newport, the eventual premiers, 6-1 in the last game before Christmas. After the break we won our next three games and we were back in the four.

It all came down to the last game against Bonbeach, win and we were in the finals, lose and we were out. Unfortunately we again lost by one run, this time 4-3, and our season was over.

Some of the season's highlights were:

- John Blaskett's home run against Waverley
- Our batting against Newport when we collected 13 hits, even though we lost. (We used 5 pitchers that day.)
- Our 28 hits and 25 RBI's against Werribee. We had a team batting ave. of .538 and a slugging ave. of .846 that day.
- Kable Hogben, nearly throwing a no hit shutout in his first start in State League. He did not give up a hit until the seventh inning with two out and two strikes on the batter. Upwey ended up getting a couple of hits and scoring two runs.
- Our base running against Upwey second time we played them.

I would like to thank the players for all their hard work both at training and on game day. Under 16 State Baseball is a big jump in their baseball careers, with most now wanting to play senior baseball as well. It can be hard keeping their focus on the game. Also the pitching at U/16 State is consistently better than what 3rd or 4th players have to face.

The Finals

We started with Chedda on the mound against Geelong at home in the 2nd Semi. The mind set of the team appeared to be with Andrew on the mound and Tommy Ellis in relief we couldn't lose. But we did. Ched by his own admission, did not have the best of days but we only scored 1 run. Admittedly unlucky in some circumstances, but the Cats outfield did produce special defence. We didn't deserve to win and were outplayed losing 4-1.

Hits: Josh Mulherin 2,

Hosting Newport Rams, the boys had come to play. Tommy on the mound dominated, restricting Newport to 2 runs. In offence the Rustlers were superb scoring 11. We were in the GF but without Chedda who would be at his 1st Major League training camp. A huge loss.

Hits: Russell Ferguson 3, Josh Mulherin 3, Andrew Gribbin 2, Justin D'Rozario, Tom Ellis, Blake Cunningham, Tim O'Neill all 1 ea.

Grand Final

In the 1st, Geelong with 2 out and 2 on, sent a solid hit over Tim O'Neill at Centrefield, that appeared to be tracked down, unusually Timmy failed to complete the catch. This gave them a 2 run lead. As we had only scored 3 runs in last 17 innings against Geelong pitcher Nick Spence and were hitting too many flyballs, something special was needed. It came in the shape of Justin D'Rozario, JD. Through the final series JD had been smashing the ball, for no result, including a cracking line drive back to the pitcher in his 1st at bat. With 1st and 2nd occupied and 2 out in the 5th, JD came thru with a cracking double down the right field line to score both runs and get us going. Just reward. No frills about JD, he gets the job done. An Andrew Adams ground ball forced an error and scored another. Karl Mackay behind the dish gave notice that stealing was not an easy option especially in 1st and 3rd situations where he prevented runners from going to 2nd on two occasions with some rocket throws including one arriving that early, the runner went back to 1st and throwing out another at 2nd.

Geelong took the lead again with a solo home run from Biddle, 2 Geelong chinkers and pop fly into the sun allowed another with 2 out. Tommy was dominating but the Cats continually applied pressure through handle hits that refused to go to glove. It was frustrating to say the least but you couldn't tell from Tom's body language

In the 6th, Karl Mackay scored on the back of hits from Blake Cunningham and Tim O'Neil to tie up the game.

Under 18 State Rustlers

...U16 State Rustlers continued

In a stellar season, the Under 18's won a deserved State Championship giving the club back to back titles.

Inheriting a John Ferguson coached team made the job easier. The boys' technique, discipline and determination reflected well on my coaching predecessor. We had Al Gribbin umpiring, Di Adams scoring and the diamonds marked by the world's most overqualified Diamond Marker, John Ferg. When all these things are in place, it makes the job a damn sight easier, and I sincerely thank them for a fantastic job. Also would like to thank my family, wife Jude, Nat, Ben & Stevo who didn't see as much of me as normal this summer. (Yeah I know, maybe could be looked as bonus for them)

To lose Andrew "Chedda" Gribbin through injury for the 1st 6 weeks was not the way to start the season. But as is typical of the guy, Chedda rolled up to act as Assistant Coach and to give me the ins and outs of both the opposition and his team mates. It reflects the resolve of this team and was greatly appreciated. Andrew did not pitch one inning in the home and aways, and our other Major League signing, Tom Ellis only pitched in 5. The majority of the games were pitched by Josh Mulherin, Russell Ferguson and Blake Cunningham. It shows the depth in this team.

There were two dominant teams in the comp. Geelong and Chelt. In home and away, Geelong lost 2½ games for the year, 2 to Chelt. We lost one to Waverley (1-0). Even though the Rustlers finished on top, in some ways we had to work harder, as the percentages revealed. We won 3 games with last inning clutch hits including Geelong twice, both hit in by Andrew Adams. Andrew started down the order early in the season but became one of our great team hitters in advancing runners whether with hit and runs or hitting right side when required. He ended up as our No 3 and was solid as a rock at 1st Base. The 2nd win against Geelong is worth a mention as we were 5 runs behind and scored 6 in the last.

Mention has to be made of Russell Ferguson who the previous week had been smashed in the face while batting, against Doctors orders, played the whole game and played a cracker. Courage personified. Another highlight was the demolition of 3rd team Waverley 11-0 in 5 innings which was a display of power and disciplined hitting as good as I've been a part, including a shutout pitched by Blake Cunningham. This is as close as you can come to a perfect game. In a game against Upwey, Ben Ford found out just prior to the start of a personal tragedy. I went to change the line up but Ben appeared, still distressed but announced he was ok to play, which he did and was best a field. A special performance yet again.

Congratulations to the John Blaskett and Kable Hogben on being selected for the Victorian Institute of Sport Academy.

I also have a lot of people I would like to thank so I'm sorry if I miss anyone. Stuart Holland my assistant coach, my wife, Robyn Hogben for scoring again this season. Dave Maxwell, for working with the players in their running technique. A vast improvement was evident in our running skills.

The pressure that we could put on opposition sides because of our willingness to run was great. John Davidson our U/16 junior co-ordinator. Sue Felsenthal for getting our scores published. Brad Heenan for umpiring our home games and Steve Rossell and Tony Cevic for umpiring our away games. All the parents for their help and support all season. Matt Gourlay, our club coach and finally all my players again.

I have coached some of these guys for three years now and it's time that they heard a different voice and were given a different perspective on how to play baseball.

I really enjoyed this season and I hope you all go on to achieve your goals in life. And remember "the harder you train, the luckier you will be."

Yours in Baseball

Trevor Hogben

Under 16 Metro

The best laid plans of mice and men.....

The season started, for the Under 16 Metro side, with great promise. A good list with room to improve, we were going to be competitive in our section. Unfortunately injury, unavailability and desertion conspired against us and the team finished the season with 2 wins ,10 losses and a forfeit.

It was a credit to the guys that they continued to play with great spirit and resolve despite the fact that we were only able to field a full team in three of our thirteen matches. This did however allow the players to rotate in a variety of positions. The one disappointing aspect to the season was training where we regularly failed to get the whole team on the track.

Overall our batting was not strong enough to provide pressure on opposition teams, despite getting some strong pitching performances. The team average was .230 with only 2 players hitting above .300.

The players in this team have good potential, some are gifted athletes, but we all need the discipline and hard work of training to realise our best ability.

My thanks go out to Hank Sheather for his support as team manager, Erica Grierson and Janine Rizzi our scorers and Bruce Fitzgerald for his support on and off the field during the year.

Colin Upfill

Under 16 Metro COG's

The Mighty COG's started the season with a bang, winning the first two games, however our lack of baseball knowledge and strength was found out once the opposition started to hit the ball and we had to come up with the plays.

We won one more game for the season and were a chance in a few others. We would have won a few more games if we had nine players in certain games. The season was difficult with not enough for three sides but too many for two sides. It was decided that it was better that the kids should play and an approach was made to Ormond Glenhuntly who had four players and formed an amalgamated side, COG's.

The State side had 11 players, COG's 10 and Colin's side 9, with the idea of the State side rotating a player to Colin's side each week. A transfer and injuries conspired against us, fortunately Colin picked up a few players. Even with this it was not guaranteed that the Metro sides had 9 players each week.

I agreed with the principle that it was better to have as many of the kids playing. Was it a success ????. Was it worth all the effort??? Would I do it again??? hmmm I don't know the answers to these questions. A special thank you to John Davidson for firstly taking on the role as U16 Co-ordinator when he did not have a child playing U16 and his efforts throughout the season.

Ben, Michael and Thomas did the bulk of pitching and catching, Will, also known as Mr Reliable, and Ben led with the bat and in the infield. Mark was used as a utility and developed the ability to steal third base. Matt put up his hand up and took on 3rd base for me as the players with the strongest arms being used as pitchers, catchers and short stops. Luke and James played mainly in the outfield with stints in the infield. Alex also played outfield and used as a relief pitcher with great effect.

I would like to thank my umpire Rod Blackman, Ormond Glenhuntly plate umpires, scorers Joanne Maher & Bev Sullivan, COG's-mobile chauffeur/line umpire Dean Felsenthal and all the parents for their support.

Bruce Fitzgerald