

A full-page background image of a basketball game. In the foreground, several players in dark jerseys are on the court. One player, number 7, is in the air, holding the basketball. Other players are positioned around the key. In the background, the stands are filled with a large crowd of spectators. The image has a reddish tint.

ELTHAM WILDCATS BASKETBALL CLUB INCORPORATED

ANNUAL REPORT

2023/2024



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PURPOSE and VISION

Purpose

Enabling everyone associated with the Eltham Wildcats opportunities for growth through basketball.

Vision Statements

To excel in providing opportunities, development and pathways for players, coaches, technical officials, and administrators within a community club.

To embed excellence, fair play and pride within the Eltham Wildcats Basketball Club.



Committees

The following Members held office on the reporting date
(30th June 2024):

Executive Committee

President:..... Peter Meehan
Vice President:Paula Hogan
Vice President:Carrie Davies
Secretary:Narelle Kent
Chief Executive Officer:..... Connor Matthews
Finance:Chris Mullins
Wellbeing: Rachel Morgan



General Committee

The members of the Executive Committee, plus

Treasurer/Finance Manager:Steven Chadd
Director of Coaching:..... Craig Stratford
Chair Technical Officials Committee:.....Symon Mountford
.....Alicia Vengust
..... Ben O'Loughlin
..... David Hickman
.....Duncan Norman
..... Katrina Read



Staff

The following employees held positions on the reporting date (30th June 2024)/on the date of the Annual General Meeting (18th November 2024):



- Chief Executive Officer: Connor Matthews/
Steven Chadd (acting)
- Finance Manager:.....Steven Chadd
- Operations Manager:.....Jacob Burnham
- Business and Communications: Jordan Canovan/Nicola Reid
- Office Manager & Child Safety & Wellbeing Officer: Sophie Foote
- Director of Coaching:..... Craig Stratford
- Director of Officiating: Pat Zerna
- Retail Manager:..... Albi Care
- Gameday & Administration Manager: Geordie McMurtrie
- Youth Team Support Officer:Olivia Temos
- Basketball Development Officer:..... -/Jason Maywald

President's Report

This has been another particularly good year for the Wildcats with many highlights including:

1. Greg Jeffers and Leighton Lewis awarded Life Membership
2. Record number of teams participating in the EDJBA
3. Under 14.1 Boys team qualified for Nationals, finishing sixth.
4. All our men's and women's NBL1 and Youth teams made finals in 2023.
5. New trials process successfully implemented for VJBL.
6. All eight first teams in VJBL made VC for the 2023/24 season.
7. Another record Eltham Dandenong Junior Basketball Tournament exceeding previous team numbers by over 200.
8. Sell-out crowd for the NBL1 season opener against Diamond Valley at Montmorency.
9. Maiden NBL1 Men's Championship in 2024; an historic moment for the club.
10. Roll out of the "UCARE" program initially implemented for the senior program by NBL1 Men's head coach and Director of

Coaching, Craig Stratford:

U – Unified
C – Committed
A – Accountable
R – Respect
E – Enjoyment





Connor Matthews made many significant contributions/improvements in his second year as CEO whilst successfully dealing with a number of challenging issues. Connor was extremely well supported by Steve Chadd, Jacob Burnham, Jordan Canovan and Sophie Foote. Special thanks to Steve who, up until April 2023 had also fulfilled the role of Director of Officiating, which is now undertaken by Pat Zerna. Steve had commenced this role as deputy in 1989 and as Director in 2001.



Connor also completed a complete review of the staffing structure at the Wildcats which led to the recruitment of Olivia Temos, Geordie McMurtrie and Albi Care. All have helped manage the increased administrative burden which is a direct consequence of the Wildcats continued growth.

My thanks to the members of the General Committee and all the Club Committees for their dedication during the year, with special thanks to Paula Hogan and Carrie Davies who run our Domestic and Championship programs respectively and are both members of the Executive.

There were two changes to the General Committee being:

- Carrie Davies appointed Vice-President (General) as Leighton Lewis' alternate during Leighton's absence.
- Alicia Vengust appointed as an Ordinary Member on the retirement of Anna Henderson.

My thanks to Anna for her active and insightful contributions to the General Committee.



The most significant change to the financial reporting of the Wildcats was determined at a Special AGM held on Monday 04 December 2023, where it was resolved that the financial year reporting date specified in rule 3 of the club's Statement of Rules (previously 31st March each year) be changed to 30th June of each year.

The full explanation is spelled out in the Finance Report.

The consequence of this change is that the financial statements for this year only cover a 15-month term. This resulted in a reported loss of \$94,304 for that period, due to accounting for two April-June quarters, which traditionally produce deficits. The Club remains in a sound financial position, with a further \$160K (being the surplus generated from EDJBT24) being transferred to the Capital Fund Reserve. More details are provided in the Finance Report.

Two important items noted in my last report, being the update to the Wildcats Strategic Plan and improvements to the Eltham High Stadium, have been delayed but are now a major focus for the General Committee and management.

Looking forward to another wonderful year for the Club,

Go Wildcats!

Peter Meehan
President

Chief Executive's Report

The 23/24 year has been a period of significant growth for the Eltham Wildcats Basketball Club (EWBC) and there are many achievements and milestones to be proud of. While the club grows, work continues to consolidate resourcing around all programs to ensure they are adequately supported. The development opportunities, pathways and consistency of experience are all things the Wildcats continue to prioritise, but the requirements to meet these goals continue to evolve and demand regular evaluation. The staff



review that is discussed in more detail below is a big part of addressing this.

Firstly, I am pleased to report a large list of highlights of the club over the past 18 months.



- EWBC domestic team entries to the Eastern District Basketball Association (EDJBA) have grown from 308 teams in the 22/23 season to 345 in the 24/25 season.
- While the number of teams remains stable, the Junior Championship Trials numbers grow year on year with over 886 registrants for the 24/25 edition of the season.
- The Eltham Dandenong Junior Basketball Tournament grew to more than 1670 teams for the 2024 edition. That's 250 more than the previous record in 2020.
- Increase in average attendance of NBL1 games to 700 at Montmorency Secondary College, up from 350 in previous seasons at Eltham High School.
- NBL1 Men's Championship – the first in clubs' history and a monumental moment for the club and the ever-growing supporter base (more on this in the Senior Championship Report)

- Elevation of Eltham's Youth Women's team to the Championship Big V Division in 2024 for the first time in 8 years.
- All Senior teams making finals in 2023. 3 of 4 teams repeating this success in 2024.
- 2023 Under 14 Nationals – Eltham's U14.1 team 6th place finish. 2nd Place finish in the National Classic of that same year. Congratulations to Head Coach Rachel Wallace and the team.
- A changing of the EWBC Financial Year to end on the 30th June (previously March 31st) to better align with ATO, WorkCover and Victorian Payroll Tax years, as well as minimising crossover with registration fee intake periods, allowing for more consistent year to year comparisons. A special thank you to Finance Manager Steven Chadd for all his work on this complicated endeavour.
- Continued financial stability with increased surplus from non-tournament operations, allowing tournament surplus to go in entirety to Facility Development fund which will support impending upgrades to Eltham High School in the near future.
- Focused investment in our one-of-a-kind Junior Administration Program which sees young people already



involved at EWBC get an opportunity to develop their professional skill set in the club environment. Long-time administrator Ava Geary was announced as a recipient of the Nillumbik Young Women's Leaders award – duly deserved as she became one of EWBC's NBL1 Game Commissioners at the age of 17.

- Junior Wildcat and now WNBL Superstar Anneli Maley represented Australia at the 2024 Paris Olympics in the 3x3 event – the first time Australia has ever qualified at the Olympic level. As always Anneli showed her unmatched competitive drive as well as incredible skill – a great role model and example of the pathway for our Junior Program.
- Introduction of UCARE Statement and values, initiated by Director of Coaching and NBL1 Men's Head Coach Craig Stratford.

UCARE Statement:

- U – Unified
- C – Committed
- A – Accountable
- R – Respect
- E – Enjoyment



Staffing

Through the last 18 months the staffing structure has been revamped to adequately resource the ever growing size and subsequent demand of our club programs. The office made 3 new hires in 2023 and an additional 2 in the weeks leading up to this report in 2024. The new staff are all listed at the front of this report.

Along with these most recent new roles comes an updated organisational structure that will provide further development opportunities, and sustainability to the office staff and the operations they manage. We couldn't be happier with these new additions and what it will mean for the service we are able to provide to our members.



Complementing these fresh faces are the experienced trio of Finance Manager Steven Chadd, Operations Manager Jacob Burnham and Wellbeing Officer Sophie Foote, which combined makes the office staff the best set-up they ever have been to elevate the EWBC to new levels, as well as to support the existing volunteer infrastructure that remains pivotal to the club's success.



Farewell

I write this report at the conclusion of my tenure in the CEO position at the Wildcats. I could not be more appreciative of the support of the community. There are too many individuals to name that deserve significant recognition for the work they put into the club and directly supporting me in my role. Whether it is staff, coaches, committee members or other volunteer roles – there is an incredibly large group of people who make the Wildcats the exceptional place that it is.

The successful running of a club the size of Eltham is a big task, and the reality is that load is shared between many people who can sometimes go underappreciated for their contributions. I would like to take this opportunity to thank those behind the scenes for their unmatched dedication and value they bring to the club. I would encourage the wider community to show their appreciation when



they have the chance as well – it's important we continue to promote the community aspect of this organisation despite our size and the necessary professionalisation that comes with it. We have something special here at EWBC and it's important that we look after each other in order to maintain it.

I have no doubt the club is positioned to go from strength to strength following my departure and I look forward to continue to be a part of it in other capacities in the near future. Let's go Wildcats!

Connor Matthews
Chief Executive Officer

Finance Report

This report covers the unusual period of April 2023 to June 2024, a 15-month period. This is because the Members of the Club agreed to change the reporting date from 31st March to 30th June each year at a Special General Meeting on 4 December 2023.

The reasons for this change were:

1. The previous date did not facilitate budgeting before the start of the financial year, given the challenges associated with the timing of the Eltham Dandenong Junior Basketball Tournament and the variable timing of Easter.
2. The previous date occurred around the cross-over between the Summer and Winter seasons of the EDJBA competition (which, being aligned to school term 1, may occur at either the end of one Club financial year or the beginning of the next), creating anomalies from year to year.
3. The previous date did not align with Australian Taxation Office, WorkCover reporting requirements or Victorian Payroll Tax years, causing additional workload.

This report shows a statutory deficit of \$94,304.73 for the 15-month period. This is to be expected: the elongated financial “year” includes two April-June quarters, which each of which traditionally generate a significant deficit. Having two such periods in the one financial report would always have been expected to lead to a book deficit.

For comparative purposes, the surplus for the 12-month period April 2023 to March 2024 was \$295,924, compared to a surplus of \$305,762 for April 2023 to March 2024. Members would be aware that in 2024 the Club held registration fee increases to a minimum and held the EDJBT24 fees at exactly the same amounts as EDJBT23.

The original budget for the April 2023 to March 2024 period was a surplus of just \$40,190, so the financial performance of your Club was strong during that period when measured against the actual



surplus of \$135,924 (after deducting the EDJBT24 surplus for equivalent comparative purposes).

For further comparison, the surplus generated for the period July 2023 to June 2024 was \$281,796 compared to the equivalent 2022-2023 surplus of \$260,077.

The Club had no loan debt at the end of the reporting period and \$2,979,737.48 in Net Assets, of which \$1,371,376.81 are Current Assets.

All of these comparisons indicate that the Club's finances were appropriately and successfully managed for the reporting period and that the Club is financially secure.

Summary of financial results

Item	April 23 - June 24	April 22 - June 23
Operating income:	\$4,578,731.52	\$4,044,449.84
Operating expense:	\$4,572,001.08	\$4,042,112.77
Non-operating income:	\$0.00	\$0.00
Non-operating expense:	\$101,035.17	\$72,675.20
Operating surplus/-deficit:	-\$94,304.73	-\$70,338.13
Transfer to capital fund reserve*:	\$0.00	\$150,000.00
Net surplus:	-\$94,304.73	-\$220,338.13

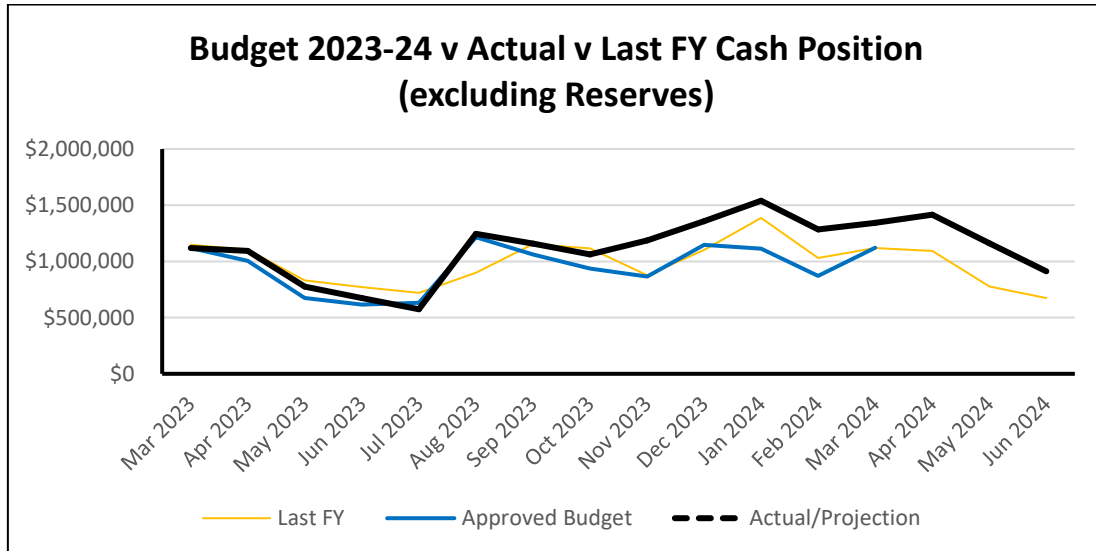
*The 2024 transfer of \$160,000 (being the EDJBT24 surplus) to the Capital Fund Reserve was from accumulated prior-period surpluses, as approved by the auditor.

Our financial statements are independently audited by Price Gibson Pty Ltd and have been certified as a true and fair view of the financial position of the Club.

Cash Flow

The Club ended the 15-month period with \$911,973 in working capital cash-at bank, plus \$310,000 in the Capital Fund Reserve, which will be used in 2024-2025 for the refurbishment of the school facilities we use under licences from the Victorian Department of Education.

This puts the Club in a strong position, able to withstand unforeseen circumstances.



Statutory Financial Statement

The full audited financial statement, in statutory format, is provided as a separate document. Please note that all values shown for the 2024 period in that statement cover the 15 months April 2023 to June 2024, whereas the values shown for 2023 cover the 12-month period April 2022 to March 2023. This is done to meet statutory reporting requirements.

The statements show that the Club is well able to meet its debts as and when they fall due.

Upon the approval of the AGM these statements will be lodged with Consumer Affairs Victoria.

Steven Chadd
Finance Manager



Tournament Report

	2024	2023	2022*	2021*	2020
Teams	1,673	1,408	1,030	720	1,421
Players	15,238	13,208	9,940	6,682	13,314
Games	4,947	4,196	1,910	1,638	4,435
Venues	39	27	23	15	27
Courts	165	131	89	66	141
Referees	774	646	413	405	670

*2021 and 2022 were impacted by the CoVid-19 pandemic.

The Eltham Dandenong Junior Basketball Tournament was another huge success with the above table showing that there were significant increases in all aspects of the Tournament. The 1673 teams that played over the weekend eclipsed the previous record of 1450 that was set in 2019 (pre-Covid) by more than 200 teams. Growth has come from several areas but pleasingly a large percentage are from interstate clubs including Western Australia.

The beginning of a new year is often a time for Basketball Associations across the state to take a little bit of down time from what is a year-round sport, and then ease into things as the summer holidays end. For the Eltham Wildcats things are a little bit different - in late December/January our staff and special 'Tournament Team' kick into top gear to co-host the largest junior basketball tournament that we are aware of globally - the Eltham Dandenong Junior Basketball Tournament.



The team consists of dedicated Eltham people who sacrifice much of their summer to co-ordinate the endless logistics of this event and to ensure that its reputation not only for its size, but also for its quality, holds up to the expectations it has earned over its 50-year existence.



As always on our side of things, a heavy burden is placed on many individuals in the following three departments:

- Referee Appointments
- Grading/Fixturing
- Communication and Administration

There is a small group of people who make an extraordinary commitment to the event who need to be recognised. For EDJBT24 they were Ava Geary, Alicia Vengust, Breanna Hogan, Cam Meyers, Keeley Miller, Jacob Burnham, Ryan Gardiner and Penny Kafkalakis.

Of course, the tournament asks for an extra level of commitment from our permanent office staff as well. Each member performed exceedingly well, including those new to their roles and experiencing the tournament for the first time. Special recognition to our CEO, Connor Matthews who was a key driver of the tournament's success with the responsibility for the overall co-ordination of this significant event.

We would also like to acknowledge and thank our tournament partners at the Dandenong Rangers, who were largely new to their roles but did a great job in preparing their operations. We have now shared custodianship of the event for half its lifetime. We also acknowledge all the other clubs, councils and partners who support the tournament by entering their teams, providing their venue, assisted in referee recruitment and much, much more.

The financial surplus for the tournament was just over \$160k.



Peter Meehan
Tournament Director

Basketball Development Report

Beginners Programs

Taya Lupton continues in the role of Beginners Program Co-Ordinator, ably assisted by Lorraine Harris. The Beginners programs include both the Kinder Club and the Aussie Hoops Cub Squad. These programs cater to players aged 3-10, with a number of different session times and levels. In 2024, we saw the inclusion of new girls-only singlets which were a great success with the participants.

Kinder Club

Kinder Club Squad, supported by Jellis Craig Eltham, is a 30 minute program for 3-4 year olds. Kinder Club has consistently sold out term on term for some years now. Recently we have added more sessions to allow a greater number of kids to participate and hopefully flow into our Cub Squad Program.

Term	Year	Enrolments
Term 1	2023	53
Term 2	2023	53
Term 3	2023	55
Term 4	2023	63
Term 1	2024	60
Term 2	2024	65
Term 3	2024	74
Term 4	2024	93

Cub Squad

The Aussie Hoops Cub Squad is for players of all abilities aged 5-10, again supported by Jellis Craig Eltham. Cub Squad aims to upskill players toward a transition to Saturday EDJBA competition. Although registrations appear to have slightly dipped, there has been a more concerted effort to move kids along into the Junior Domestic program which has lead to this decrease.



In Term 2 2024, we trialled a new process of entering suitable Cub Squad participants into pre-arranged teams for Eltham within the EDJBA under 8 and 10 divisions. These teams are coached by Cub Squad coaches which helps assist with the transition. This was very well received and also allowed for other Cub Squad Participants who haven't yet flowed into the Domestic program to try a game as a fill-in and help reduce the parental hesitancy to take the next step into junior domestic basketball.

Term	Year	Enrolments
Term 1	2023	337
Term 2	2023	257
Term 3	2023	307
Term 4	2023	287
Term 1	2024	296
Term 2	2024	233
Term 3	2024	257
Term 4	2024	236

Junior Domestic Preparation Program

The Junior Championship Preparation Program runs for 6 weeks during Term 3. The Program is designed as a lead-in to the VJBL Trials process. The Program is led by Justin Wyncoll with a large support group of current and prospective Championship Coaches. Key aims of the Program are:

- Introduce athletes to concepts, language and style of play that they will experience in the Trials process and into VJBL
- Give athletes exposure to Championship coaches who will be present during the Trials process
- Familiarise coaches with athletes & upskill less experienced/younger coaches, with a view to taking on coaching/assistant coaching roles.

2023 Edition – 161 Registrations and 2 junior coaches. Both junior coaches progressed to Assistant Coach roles in the 2023/24 Championship Season.

2024 Edition – 182 Registrations and 8 junior coaches. One junior coach progressed to a Head Coach role in the 2024/25 Championship Season.

Holiday Camps

Holiday Camps again proved popular and were conducted during Term 1, 2 and 3 Holidays as well as over the Summer Holiday Break. Summer Holiday Break Programs were smaller in nature, due to the Club's focus on the Eltham Dandenong Tournament and there were mainly focused on Beginner Programs. Other Holiday programs included Shooting Camps, Domestic and Championship Skills, Preparation Camps for Trials and New to Domestic and Girl Only Camps. The Camps are led by NBL1 players such as Hailey Leidel and Mitch Blackburn and Championship Coaches including Nic Nolan, Fab Caverzan, Daniel Dowisha and Jhye Burton.

Numbers have remained somewhat consistent for these camps. As is typical, numbers dip slightly in holidays where we hold 3x3 tournaments - as we lose the day for the tournament and registrations numbers for camps on the following days are always reduced.

Term	Year	Enrolments
Term 1	2023	289 + 3X Cup
Term 2	2023	456
Term 3	2023	443
Term 1	2024	255 + 3X Cup
Term 2	2024	473
Term 3	2024	327 + 3x3 Tournament

3X Cup

In 2024, Basketball Victoria held the second annual 3x Cup, a multi-stage 3x3 basketball competition designed to bring clubs together from across the state. The tournament begins with local club-hosted tournaments during the Term 1 holidays. Winners from these initial tournaments qualify for the regional qualifiers in Term 2, and those successful at the regional level advance to the State Championship held during the Term 3 holidays.



Our club's tournament this year saw an impressive turnout, with 111 teams participating across various age groups in a packed day of basketball from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

We had some great achievements in the 3x3 space, with the second biggest club representation at the state championships and 2 teams that took home state championships in the Under 11s girls and Under 17 boys!

Additionally, we hosted a separate, participation-focused tournament during the Term 3 holidays, encouraging broader involvement from our domestic players. This tournament saw an outstanding 117 teams joining in the excitement, creating a fun and vibrant day for all and signalling strong growth for 3x3 basketball.

Walking Basketball

Our Walking Basketball program has continued to be successful over the last 12 months.

We have over 20 regular members and are continuing to grow. Our members skills, game play and fitness continue to develop on the weekly. Coach Sophie is constantly having to challenge her players

with new and difficult drills because their skills are consistently improving. We have members who have moved more than an hour away and still join us whenever they can, which shines a light on the group's culture and overall connection. The friendships developed over the years of this program and the social aspect it provides for this demographic is a crucial part of the program's success.

In other exciting news Optimal Health Lab have proudly extended their major sponsorship of our Walking Basketball program until 2025, allowing it to remain free of charge and enabling direct support from OHL to our Walking Basketball members.

Some highlights of the past 12 months have been our several match and training sessions with Darebin Walking Basketball and Bulleen Walking Basketball, a showcase game at St Thomas the Apostle Primary School, an Optimal Health Lab quiz and Q&A session and our annual Walking Basketball Tournament hosted by Basketball Victoria at the State Basketball Centre.

We look forward to continuing to develop more opportunities for our members and continue to grow our Walking Basketball program. The most important development in this space is the planning of the first Eltham Walking Basketball Tournament, which is in the planning stages after receiving a successful grant from Banyule Council.

Jason Maywald
Basketball Development Officer

Operations Report

Following last year's excitement with the opening of the new Montmorency Stadium, this year brought a return to steady operational focus. We were pleased to welcome a new member to our operations team, Geordie McMurtrie, in the role of Gameday Manager. Geordie is also responsible for our Administration program and for our facilities management.

In early 2024, Montmorency Stadium courts 4 and 5 underwent a full lighting upgrade, transitioning to LED lighting. This upgrade not only offers significant energy savings but also enhances operational efficiency, as the LED lights can be turned on and off as needed, unlike the previous lighting system, which required a warm-up and cool-down period.

In July 2024, with residual funds from the Montmorency Stadium construction budget, the school advocated for an upgraded sound and lighting system, which was promptly installed. This enhancement was showcased during our final NBL1 home games of the season, bringing a professional atmosphere to game nights and greatly enhancing the experience for spectators and participants.

Looking forward, we are preparing for a series of upgrades at Eltham High School over the next year, which will include updated rings and backboards, roof repairs, and coverage for the exposed cladding. These improvements reflect our commitment to providing top-quality facilities for our teams, members, and the wider community.

Jacob Burnham
Operations Manager

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Administration Report

The junior administration program has seen another year of growth with 15 new administrators either having graduated from the trainee program or currently in training. This growth was needed due to the program being stretched after the addition of the new Montmorency senior secondary courts as well as some important senior admins moving on to full-time work.

This influx of admins has come with a reinvigoration of the program. This has included a rework of the education they receive while in training, a new knowledge check exam to officially pass training and bi-annual admin program meetings to offer additional education on conflict resolution, referee rostering and new admin practices.

These new training practices have resulted in a substantial growth in the administration program with the average administrator being assessed and promoted 1.5 times. This has resulted in a 30% growth in admins available to manage a 1 or 2 court venue.

With a positive year behind us, we look forward to improving and making clearer pathways for admins, a restructuring of the administration program's pay rates, and adding new learning opportunities like first aid training and increasing conflict resolution training.

Geordie McMurtrie
Gameday & Administration Manager



Senior Domestic Report

The Senior Domestic program has grown into a vital part of the community, offering over 1,300 players the chance to stay active, connect socially, and continue playing the sport they love, a passion many have enjoyed for most of their lives.

Team numbers have declined more than anticipated over the last two seasons. After contacting those who didn't return, most cited reasons outside of our control, such as injuries and player availability, with many expressing intentions to re-join in future seasons. There are also some teams that have been removed from the competition due to patterns of poor behaviour towards referees and/or opposition teams. While the drop was larger than expected, we are hopeful that upcoming developments and more refined marketing efforts will strengthen our ability to promote the program in 2025 and help increase team participation moving forward.

In 2023, we observed an increase in antisocial behaviour within the Senior Domestic competition, both among teams and players, as well as towards referees and venue supervisors. In response, we implemented a technical foul tracking system similar to that used in the VJBL. During the most recent Autumn season, this system resulted in 11 players receiving formal behaviour warnings and 4 players being suspended solely due to the accumulation of technical fouls.

Since introducing this system, referees have become more vigilant in reporting misconduct, leading to an increase in tribunals and lengthy suspensions for offending players. As part of our



crackdown on poor behaviour, we have also declined team registrations from several teams with a significant history of hostility in previous seasons.

While it is too early to definitively assess the program's success, it is noteworthy that none of the players who received



suspensions have re-offended and we have seen some serial offending teams out of the competition.

Senior Domestic Numbers of Teams

Season	Team Numbers
Spring 2019	164
Autumn 2020	160
Autumn 2021	170
Spring 2021	167
Autumn 2022	165
Spring 2022	165
Autumn 2023	160
Spring 2023	154
Autumn 2024	149
Spring 2024	150

North-East Draft League

The North-East Draft League began its inaugural season in 2019, offering a competitive platform for current and former Big V and NBL1 players, top senior domestic players, and standout VJBL graduates to play in during the off-season. The D-League is more than just a high-level basketball competition—it also provides a valuable development pathway for referees, who gain experience officiating at an elevated standard of play. Additionally, the league fosters a social environment, with players drafted into teams, which encourages networking within the basketball community. Unique features set the D-League apart from typical senior domestic competitions, including a shot clock, three referees per game, statistics tracking, and game recordings for highlights.

In September 2023 the North East Draft League returned stronger than ever with some great people, basketball talent, new sponsors and more! We had record numbers of fan engagement on our social media platforms, with some videos getting upwards of 20k views.

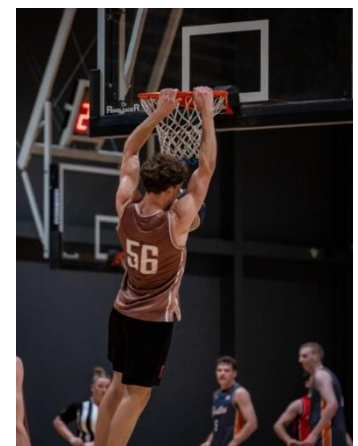
Thanks to our sponsors for the 2023 season, Goalrilla, Bathroom Werx, Drip Digital, Taylor Teamwear, Air Fusion, JR Smith Media, Naught & Lewis Land Surveying.

As the season was kicking off, we had received a lot of interest in a women's competition and decided to run a trial in the back half of the 2023 season to see if there was enough interest. We received an incredible amount of interest when we advertised it and ended up running a 6 team competition with a very high level of NBL1 & Big V talent while also allowing us to offer some opportunities to some of our higher level U18 VJBL players.



Both the Men's and Women's competitions were a great success. Games were competitive, feedback was positive and the community environment we were aiming to create was there.

In 2024 we opened up expressions of interest for the Men's competition of the first time as it previously had been invite only as well as reopening Women's expressions of interest. There was an overwhelming strong response to these forms with substantially more interest than spots available. Teams were drafted and teams fixtured and scheduled to play a 10-game season. The season so far is going smoothly, with plenty of high level, competitive basketball being played.



A big thanks to our 2024 sponsors: Goalrilla, Naught Gin, iAthletic & JR Smith Media for their continued support of the competition.

Unified Basketball

Unified Basketball launched in 2021, led by Wildcats parent Naomi Symington and her family in partnership with Special Olympics Australia. This program fosters social inclusion by connecting individuals with and without intellectual disabilities through the



sport of basketball. In Unified Basketball, a Unified Athlete with an intellectual disability is paired with a neurotypical participant, called a Unified Partner. Together, they join teams and compete each Wednesday evening alongside the Mixed Senior Domestic competition at Eltham High School.

Since its inception, the program has continued to grow. Starting with three games on Wednesday evenings in 2021, the program expanded in 2022 to four game slots, supporting eight teams that compete each week and train on Sunday evenings.



We are immensely proud to be involved in this program, though the credit for its success belongs entirely to Naomi Symington and her family. Their dedication, commitment, and countless hours of work have made Unified Basketball a safe, welcoming, and enriching environment for all participants.

Plans for 2025 include expanding the Unified offerings with the addition of a Unified Kids program. This initiative will help us engage a wider range of the community, providing inclusive opportunities and reducing barriers for those interested.

Jacob Burnham
Operations Manager

Junior Championship Report

The 2023/24 Championship season has been a year of remarkable achievement and growth for Eltham. This season, we witnessed an unprecedented number of athletes trialling for a place in our Championship Teams, with a total of 850 athletes participating in the trials. This report aims to provide an overview of the trials process, the implementation of new strategies to enhance player communication, and the outcomes of the trials.

Trials Process

The sheer number of athletes trialling this season necessitated meticulous planning and organization. To ensure a smooth and efficient trials process, we implemented several new strategies that significantly improved our operations.

Centralised Player Communications Website

One of the most significant enhancements this season was the introduction of a centralised player communications website. This platform was designed to reduce the significant administrative load on our committee and coaching staff while providing clear and transparent communication to parents and players. The website included Squad lists, trial schedules, FAQs and updates, ensuring that all stakeholders were well-informed throughout the process.

Identifiable Independent Coaches

We also introduced a pool of identifiable independent coaches to oversee the trials. These coaches were selected for their expertise and impartiality, ensuring a fair and unbiased assessment of all athletes. Their involvement added a layer of transparency to the selection process, which was highly appreciated by both parents and players.

Support from Team Support Officer

This season, the Championship Committee benefited immensely from the support of a new Team Support Officer. Working alongside committee members and Head Coach Craig Stratford, the Team Support Officer played a pivotal role in managing the logistics and communications behind the scenes. Their contributions cannot be underestimated, and we extend our heartfelt thanks to them and all the coaching staff who dedicated their time and effort during this period.



Review and Improvements

Late in 2023, upon completion of the trials process, a comprehensive review was conducted. The objective was to identify any opportunities for improvement in preparation for the 2024 trials. This review involved meaningful contributions from members of the Championship Committee, coaching leadership, and office staff.

Outcomes of the Review

The review highlighted several areas where we can enhance our processes. Key takeaways included the need for more efficient scheduling, improved communication strategies, and enhanced support for athletes and coaches. We are confident that by implementing these improvements, we can continue to refine the trials process and provide an even better experience for everyone involved.

Team Selection

At the conclusion of the trials, we successfully entered 61 boys and girls teams into the Victorian Junior Basketball League (VJBL). This



is an increase from the 57 teams we registered the previous year, reflecting the growing interest and talent within our community.

Challenges

Despite the abundance of talented athletes wishing to play at Eltham, we continue to face challenges related to the availability of suitable coaches and court space. To address these issues, we recognize the importance of upskilling and supporting domestic coaches. By investing in their development, we hope to see more coaches progress to the Championship level, thereby expanding our capacity to accommodate more teams.

Coaching Staff

Our coaching staff played a crucial role in the success of this season. Under the leadership of Craig Stratford, our Director of Coaching, and with the support of lead coaches Jason Harris and Chris Cameron, our coaching team provided exceptional guidance and mentorship to our athletes.

Director of Coaching

Craig Stratford, as our Director of Coaching, has been instrumental in shaping the strategic direction of our program and ensuring the highest standards of coaching are maintained.

Lead Coaches

Jason Harris, as the lead coach for the U12-14 boys and girls, and Chris Cameron, as the lead coach for the U16-18 boys and girls, have both demonstrated outstanding leadership and commitment. Their expertise and dedication have been vital in fostering the development of our young athletes.



Acknowledgements

We extend our deepest gratitude to all those who have contributed to the success of this season. From the athletes and their families to the coaches, committee members, and support staff, your unwavering commitment and support have been invaluable.

We look forward to another successful season and to continuing our mission of fostering excellence in youth basketball at Eltham.

The 2023/24 Championship season has been a testament to the hard work, dedication, and passion of our athletes, coaches, and committee members. The implementation of new strategies and the continuous review and improvement of our processes have enabled us to achieve remarkable success. As we look ahead to the 2024 season, we are confident that we can build on this foundation and continue to excel.



Carrie Davies
Chair – Junior Championship Committee

Technical Officials Report

I would be remiss if I did not begin this report without acknowledging my predecessor Steve Chadd, whose exceptional leadership over 22+ years has left a permanent mark on the Technical Official Program at Eltham. Within his tenure, the branch has gained recognition through numerous accolades, including both Advisor and Branch awards. Together with his deputy, Laurie Nelsen, they have established a robust foundation of education and excellence.

Grassroots Development

Within grassroots sports, defined as organized community-level competitions for amateur athletes, exist roles beyond players themselves, but also includes coaches, referees, bench officials, and assessors. Within this space, I have been collaborating with the C-Grade and B-Grade development teams creating educational

content that elevates the quality of officiating for our domestic competitions, with a focus on enjoyment, inclusivity, and safety.

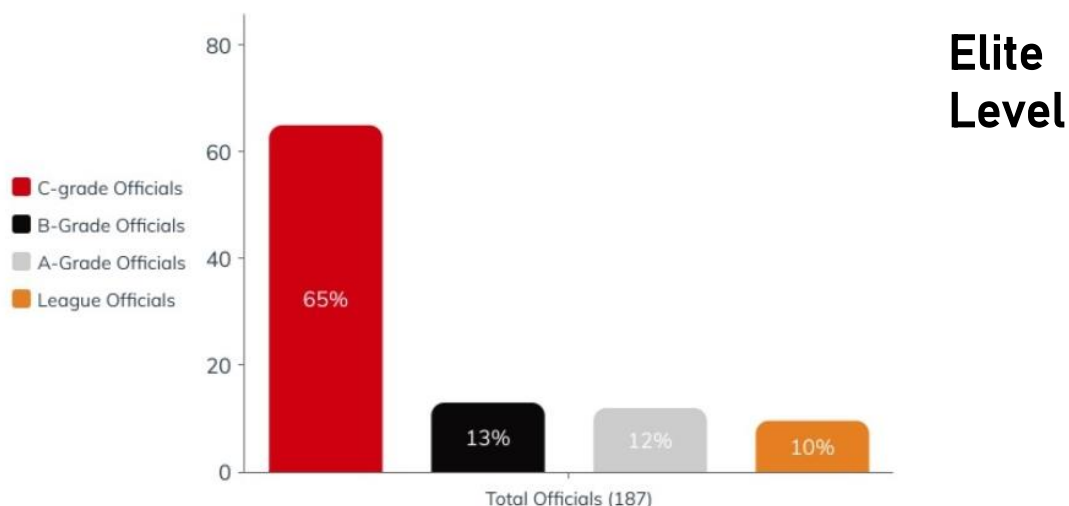
Although the process of implementing these improvements is gradual, we are already witnessing significant positive outcomes. This year we ran 3x beginner schools. 2x B-Grade Programs, 1x A-Grade Course & an Educator training session. At the time of writing this report, Eltham supports a roster of 187 referees across our various competitions, including VJBL, midweek, and



junior domestic. Through retention efforts, increased training &

more programs, our strategic plan is to upgrade our officials so that the majority of our roster are B-Grade and above.

Official Statistics



Officiating

As a Tier 1 association (indicating clubs with an NBL-1 team), Eltham continues to not only meet but exceed our quota of league officials. Our referees have consistently demonstrated strong performances, not just within the VJBL but also within the BigV and NBL1 leagues. Noteworthy are Elliot Green and Mitch Hare, our highest-ranking on-court technical officials, attaining national finals.

I also congratulate Ethan Clare and James



Kyriakopoulos, our next tier of elite officials for their outstanding performances in the BigV and VJBL grand finals this year, further solidifying Eltham's reputation. Through their mentorship, numerous other officials have also secured



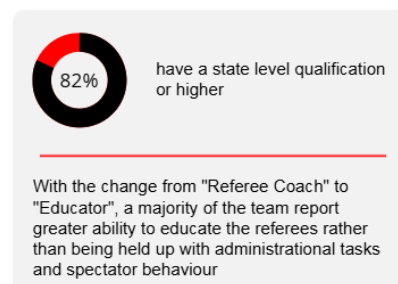
key appointments across the NJC, VJBL, and BigV finals. My thanks also extend to the league referee coaches, including our interim CEO, who have generously contributed their time and expertise to the advancement of officiating at the state level, with a select few also securing national appointments.

Scoretable and Statisticians

An additional component of my role is overseeing the performance of our statisticians and scoretable officials. I would like to specifically commend Alicia Vengust and Amy Weedon for their invaluable contributions to not only our club as convenors, but also to the state & country. Their dedication to nurturing newly qualified officials and guiding them through the ranks has been instrumental in maintaining our high standards across leagues and events. With a significant proportion of the national scoretable team hailing from Eltham, this accomplishment is a testament to the tireless efforts of these leaders and their exceptional team. I extend my appreciation for their expertise and look forward to continued collaboration.

Educators/Referee Coaches

One of my first actions as Director of Officiating was to redefine the role of the "Referee Coach" to that of an "Educator." This



change was accompanied by a shift in uniform to align with the club's colours, as well as a renewed emphasis on education and deepening rules knowledge. In light of recent changes at the state level, while we are no longer authorized to conduct our own Level 1 accreditation programs, we are permitted to develop our own introductory courses. The primary objective to increase the skillset of the official, rather than merely overseeing venue operations.

Pat Zerna
Director of Officiating



Senior Championship Report

The Senior Championship Report Encompasses Results from both the 23 and 24 seasons due to the timing of the new EWBC Financial Year. Overall, we are very proud of the program across the board. There is meaningful integration between our junior and senior programs which is the foundation of why we exist – as well as a strong connection with the entirety of the Wildcat community through the involvement of our players in various coaching roles. This connection can best be demonstrated with the installation of the UCARE Values that within the Senior program and the wider club base.

Crowd numbers continue to grow with an estimated average home attendance of 700 at Montmorency Secondary College. This almost double the capacity of the previous home venue Eltham High School. Streaming numbers are also impressive with Eltham having the 7th highest total streams in 2024 across not just NBL1 South but the entirety of the NBL1 nationally. We are eternally grateful to all the major sponsors of the program including Aligned Leisure/Jumpshots, Lavrin and Lawrence Orthodontics, Air Fusion Heating and Cooling, Lyons Bodyworks, Midland Roofing and all the other community support we have received.

It's important also to recognise the efforts of all roles within the Senior Program, including our Gameday Staff who are brilliantly led by Operations Manager Jacob Burnham who couldn't be more dedicated to giving the best experience possible to everyone connected to BigV and NBL1, especially our supporters. Our Team Managers always do an incredibly job, most notably Jodi Vine who took on two separate teams this year and has been the most stable organisational force within the NBL1 Men's and Women's Teams. Additionally, our Scorers and Statisticians consistently show they are the best in the business, with multiple members in both cohorts representing Eltham at higher levels of competition throughout the country. We are so thankful for all those behind the scenes who make the Senior Program go from strength to strength.



Youth Women

The 2023 Season saw the installation of Scott Delzoppo as the new Head Coach of the Youth Women's team. Following this the team went on to go undefeated in the regular season of the BigV Youth League Division One Women's competition. Unfortunately, the team lost their finals match-up – however their terrific season did put them in a position to compete to be promoted to the Youth Championship Division in the 2024 Youth Qualifying series.

The following season the team competed in the aforementioned grading event and were successful in both games, meaning that the team was elevated to the Youth Championship Division for the first time in 8 years. During this season the team saw an influx of players from the junior program – mixed in with an established playing group from years prior. While the team only won 4 of their 22 contests, it was a valuable experience for all involved. Following the season we saw the departure of Head Coach Scott Delzoppo – whose efforts in the role are greatly appreciated, having brought the team to a level that hadn't been reached for some time.



Replacing Scott Delzoppo is Victorian State-level Head Coach Kelly Walker – we are incredibly excited to have Kelly in charge and look forward to her 2025 campaign – which again will begin in the Youth Qualification Series.

2023 Awards

MVP



Meghan Stagoll

MVP Runner Up



Kiara Mountford

Coaches Award



Charli Filliponi-Haines

Golden Hands



Meghan Stagoll

2024 Awards

MVP



Jamie Weddle

MVP



Kiara Mountford

Rookie of the Year



Addison Knight

Rookie of the Year



Justine Walker

Golden Hands



Kiara Mountford



Youth Men

The Youth Men's Team was head coached in the '23 and '24 seasons by long-time Eltham Wildcat Junior Coach Rod Degenhardt. In the 2023 season the team finished in the top 4 with a record of 12 wins and 10 losses, continuing the long run of high performance within the program. In 2024 the team again finished with a 12-10 record finishing 4th for the second season in a row. A special mention to lifelong Wildcat Zahn Agosta who was 2nd in the league in scoring for eligible players.

During this period, we saw a significant connection between the Youth Men's and NBL1 team with clear development opportunities and pathways. The on-court roles of Zak Cunningham and Zahn Agosta in the 2024 season are major part of this, with both players having represented Eltham since U12 Junior Championship and before that domestically. Head Coach Rod Degenhardt's involvement was pivotal in this success and navigated the challenges of the role brilliantly. Rod has decided to step away from Head Coaching senior basketball for a period of time, but we are incredibly thankful for his tenure and are privileged to have him continue in prominent coaching roles within the club moving forward. As of the time of writing a replacement Head Coach for the Youth Men has not been finalised, but a roster with a large amount of continuity from the 2024 season has been locked in

2023 Awards

MVP

Team
Leadership

DPOY

Golden Hands



**Mitch
Blackburn**



**Zak
Cunningham**



Harry Stones



Zac Anderson

2024 Awards

MVP

Team
Leadership

DPOY

Golden Hands



Zac Anderson



**Zak
Cunningham**



James Toohey



Zac Anderson

NBL1 Women

The NBL1 Women continue to be led by Head Coach Matt Bongetti who took over in the 2022 season and continues to be a reliable and valued leader heading into next year's 2025 season.

The Women's team achieved finals success in the 2023 season after finishing 8th in the 19-team competition, sealing the position with a hard-fought win against arch rivals Diamond Valley in the final home game of the season. The team defeated Frankston in their elimination final – marking the first finals win since the Wildcats introduction to NBL1 in 2019. Playing away at Waverley in the following semifinal – the team unfortunately couldn't get over the line but were buoyed by a travelling crowd that likely outnumbered the home team supporters – showing the great support they had garnered throughout the season.



In the 2024 season the team again finished 8th – this time falling to Ballarat in the first elimination final. A special note to Wildcat Junior Ally Bates who made her return to the senior program after 6 years in the American Collegiate system. Unfortunately, Ally was to sustain an ACL injury in the first game of the season but we were ecstatic to have her back in Wildcat colours.

As has been the case for multiple years now the team has been led by captain Bec Pizzey who embodies all the qualities the club stands for; alongside her has been a consistent core of players including American Hailey Leidel, Lily Scanlon and Taylah Wynne who consistently perform and represent the club in outstanding fashion.

2023 Awards

MVP



Hailey Leidel

DPOY



Rebecca Pizzey

Golden Hands



Rebecca Pizzey

2024 Awards

MVP



Lily Scanlon

DPOY



Rebecca Pizzey

Most Improved



Kayla Salmons

Golden Hands



Hailey Leidel

NBL1 Men

The NBL1 Men began the season with a revamped roster bursting with talent. Leading the team since 2022 Head Coach Craig Stratford recruited new talent to the team including NBL star Angus Glover for the 2023 season. This saw the team elevate to new heights, finishing 5th on the ladder. After winning their first final against Waverley, despite their best efforts the team lost in the semi-final to top of the ladder Knox Raiders in front of a record crowd at the State Basketball Centre. Special Recognition to Owen Foxwell who won the NBL1 South Youth Player of the year.

In the 2024 season the team started off with a bumpy start record wise, but quickly turned this around to again finish 5th on the ladder. Not only did the team make the finals but through a series of truly incredible performances, including a game winning pull-up three in the final seconds of the preliminary final – Eltham managed to take home their maiden NBL1 title in what was a historic moment for the club. The Grand Final was played against Ballarat at Dandenong Stadium with close to 2000 in attendance and a large Eltham Wildcats contingent.



It is hard to overstate the significance of this achievement given the context of the season. Having joined the NBL1 competition from the Big V level in 2019 – it may have seemed a lofty goal for the team to be Championship calibre by 2024 – which is exactly what is occurred. This success is a credit to the coaching staff – led by Craig Stratford who so strongly leads the program. It is also important to note the work of those involved in Eltham's Senior Program over many years past – as they are due recognition for all the hard work they put in many roles, including volunteers, as the foundation.

A huge congratulations to all involved and certainly we hope the Wildcat Community felt the pride and joy.

2023 Awards

MVP



Angus Glover

DPOY



Sam Short

Golden Hands



Sam Short

2024 Awards

MVP



Owen Foxwell

DPOY



Sam Short

Most Improved



Zak Cunningham

Golden Hands



Owen Foxwell

Connor Matthew
Chief Executive Officer



Junior Domestic Report

This is always a great report to write on how our domestic program continues to flourish in many ways.

I am extremely proud of the work our club and its volunteers do to ensure our junior basketball participation continues to increase in all aspects of the community. We have some very dedicated volunteers that work tirelessly with very minimal appreciation but do it for the kids.

This is a massive thank you and congratulations to those people. A special mention to Lara Masters as the boy's coordinator who goes above and beyond in her role. Our club would be lost without our dedicated volunteers.

Enrolment Numbers

Below is the number of junior domestic teams in the past 12 months. We have seen an increase of 24 & 22 teams in each of the seasons which is a great result.

I am able to share that the Summer 24/25 numbers have increased too with some milestones & firsts being reached but I will leave the great news until next AGM.

Summer 2023-2024

	U8	U10	U12	U14	U16	U18	U21	Sub - total	Total
Boys	22	37	48	50	41	29	10	237	
Girls	6	20	23	18	17	11	1	96	333

Winter 2024

	U9	U1 1	U1 3	U15	U17	U19/21		Sub- total	Total
Boys	39	39	43	45	34	18		218	
Girls	20	20	19	16	15	4		94	312



The domestic program has changed last year in a few ways for registering which included a hard close off for registrations to ensure numbers were in along with a friendship form for Under 14 & older age groups. All that has been implemented has been of great help in assisting convenors and team selections to fall within the timeframe set by the EDJBA.

Coach Education and Development

Our trio of coaching development advisors have been a great wealth of information and assistance this past year.

Thank you to Jason Maywald, Tom O'Connor and Merryn Brown.

Our coaches' advisors have run beginner coaching workshops and assisted throughout the year as a resource to new and established coaches.

Our advisors have been available to be contacted via email and do just pop in the courts to lend a hand and/or be a resource to all our new and existing coaches seeking assistance by helping with training and game plans, personal growth over all the age groups. Please ensure that you welcome them to your session if they come past.

Reports/Complaints/Feedback

The club implemented a QR link to give feedback/complaints for the club as a whole. Whilst it has made it easier to report things, the level of feedback continues to stay at a regular level with varying levels of issues to look into.

Each case is reviewed by required staff and each issue does take considerable time to finalise.

Should you wish to report anything, especially good positive feedback please go to our club website and send it through. Alternatively contact the junior domestic email and we will investigate your query.

Acknowledgements

As previously mentioned, we would be lost without our dedicated and tireless working team in ensuring that our children are able to participate in a great community sport and continue to make themselves available as the season progresses.

Boys Age Group Convenors – Cate Forbes, Lucinda Boca, Cherie Hazelman, April Anderson, Daniela Parisella, Connor Hince, Michael Milanese, Crystal Oliver, Narelle Kent and Lara Masters as the boys coordinator.

Girls Age Group Convenors – Amy Chubb, Tanya Blake, Anna Lewis, Katrina Read, Jamie McNamee.



Thank you to the Wellbeing Committee – we have called upon and referred people to you during the past 12 months and matters have been dealt with confidentially and directly with those involved. They are available for all club members. Should you need assistance, please go to the club website or contact the office for details.

Thanks to the office staff who have assisted where needed and continue to look after the club when we call on them.

Finally. the girl's coordinator position is currently vacant.

This position is open to anyone wishing to look at being involved with a small remuneration available and all training is given. Please contact Paula at juniordomestic@elthamwildcats.net.au to find out more.



Thank you to all the members of our wonderful club. The past 12 months have been busy for everyone and know that with us all working together we can achieve great things.

If anyone is interested in becoming part of the Domestic Committee, girls coordinator, age group convenor, administration work, coach or would like to know more about any role within the junior domestic program, please contact Paula Hogan. All welcome.



Paula Hogan
Vice President & Domestic Program Overall Co-Ordinator & Committee Chair

Wellbeing Report

Our Commitment to Child Safety at Eltham:

All children who are a part of the Club have a right to feel safe and to be safe. The wellbeing of the children in our Club will always be our first priority and our Club has a zero tolerance to child abuse. Our Club aims to create a child safe and child friendly environment where children feel safe and have fun and our Club's activities are always carried out in the best interests of the children.

At our Club, everyone must operate within our accepted ethical framework, including Basketball Victoria's Codes of Conduct, Basketball Victoria's Member Protection Declaration, Victorian Working with Children Checks and our Clubs Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Code of Conduct.

Eltham Basketball Club is committed to stamping out all forms of bullying, harassment and abuse, with all members of the Club responsible for actively supporting this commitment. We strongly encourage members to be upstanders, not bystanders, in matters of child safety.

Over the past year, the Child Safety and Wellbeing Committee has made strides in further defining our commitment to safety. A key initiative has been the development of a Communication Policy, which sets out clear guidelines for appropriate communication between adults and children within the Club. This



policy aims to ensure that children under the age of 18 feel safe, respected, and able to fully participate in a supportive environment.



Education and awareness have also been important aspects of the Child Safety and Wellbeing committee. We continue to emphasize the importance of respect for all young people involved in our Club, including referees and administrative staff. Our Zero Tolerance policy extends to any abuse directed towards our referees and administration team.

One of the highlights of this past year was our first Youth Forum, led by Sophie Foote and a group

of committed young people. This event brought together over 20 youth participants, who offered valuable insights and suggestions on how we can better support children and young people in the Club. A major outcome of the forum has been the formation of a Youth Committee, which will provide a voice for our young members and further strengthen our commitment to child safety.

We extend our thanks to Connor and Peter for their strong leadership and steadfast support of the wellbeing and safety of all Club members.



Rachel Morgan
Chair – Child Safety and Wellbeing Committee

Tribunal Report

I'd like to start by thanking all the volunteers who work behind the scenes to support the Tribunal. For most players, coaches, and spectators, the Tribunal isn't something you'll encounter often, but it plays a crucial role in the governance of basketball. Special thanks to Jacob Burnham and Penny Kafkalakis, our hearing officers, who bridge the gap between the independent Tribunal and the Club. Though their efforts often go unnoticed, they are invaluable.

Basketball Victoria is currently piloting a new Tribunal process. As Chair, I've been involved in testing and providing feedback. While it's still a work in progress, I believe the changes will lead to a more consistent and simpler system, with more information to come soon.

Thank you to all the reporting officials—your reports have become clearer and more detailed, making the Tribunal's work much easier.

I also sit on several Tribunals across the state, and in my view, Eltham operates exceptionally well.

One piece of advice: most Tribunal cases can be avoided. Here's a quick fact—NBL referees make 80%+ of calls correctly, while our developing referees are still learning. Remember, each game has four "teams": the two teams playing, the referees, and the spectators. Taking a deep breath, substituting, or stepping outside briefly can often prevent an outburst that could result in a Tribunal appearance.

Penalties vary based on the severity of the offence. If found guilty, individuals may face penalties ranging from volunteer service and suspensions to, in the most serious cases, lifetime bans. Over the past 12 months, the average suspension or ban has been between 12 and 16 weeks, with the most recent ban being 142 weeks. These penalties apply across Australia.

Finally, I want to thank our Tribunal volunteers. We have an outstanding group, including psychologists, lawyers, retired players and coaches, professionals, and community members. They work



impartially and independently, upholding the By-laws with integrity.
Thank you for your time and dedication.

Enjoy the game and may your time on the court be filled with fun
and sportsmanship—let's keep the Tribunal empty and focus on the
game we all love!

Kieran Thorpe
Chair – Basketball Victoria Tribunal (Eltham)



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