

JAMES HIRD

ACADEMY

EST. 2010

JULY 2016

WELCOME MESSAGE



JHA graduates Tom Wallis, Joe Daniher and Jake Long

Hello and welcome to the first James Hird Academy Newsletter for 2016.

This season has already ushered in major changes for the Academy with a number of staff additions, including a new Coach and freshly-appointed Program Coordinator (see the News & Notes section for more details!).

The JHA itself is also undergoing a metamorphosis of sorts as the program slightly shifts its focus from serving as an elite junior training regimen, to reinforcing its most important objective: fun!

The Academy also looks forward to welcoming all JHA members to two Development Day training clinics to be held at the True Value Solar Centre this season, as well as our flagship event – the annual Guard of Honour Game (see the JHA Calendar for dates).

Finally, the JHA would like to officially welcome and congratulate John Worsfold on taking the reins as Senior Coach of the Essendon Football Club – keep reading this newsletter to hear Woosha's thoughts on the Academy!

Stay up to date with all things JHA by checking out the James Hird Academy homepage here: <http://www.essendonfc.com.au/team/james-hird-academy>

Until next time, go Bombers!



Dean Wallis, Anthony Daniher and Michael Long



JAMES HIRD ACADEMY - ACCELERATION GROUP

PLAYER	AGE	FATHER
Jett Bewick	19	Darren Bewick
Harvey Daniher	18	Chris Daniher
Matthew Neagle	18	Merv Neagle

JAMES HIRD ACADEMY - NEXT GENERATION

PLAYER	AGE	FATHER
Jaxon Neagle	16	Merv Neagle
Mason Fletcher	16	Dustin Fletcher
Ricky O'Donnell	15	Gary O'Donnell
Darcy Denham	15	Sean Denham
Tom Hird	15	James Hird
Kurtis Barnard	15	Paul Barnard
Max Fletcher	13	Dustin Fletcher
Joshua Misiti	13	Joe Misiti
Nyawi Moore	13	Nathan Lovett-Murray
Alwyn Davey Jnr	12	Alywn Davey
Jayden Davey	12	Alywn Davey
Tex Wanganeen	12	Gavin Wanganeen
Alex Hird	12	James Hird
Will Hamilton	11	Paul Hamilton
Luke Barnard	11	Kurtis Barnard
Luca Alessio	11	Steve Alessio

JAMES HIRD ACADEMY - BABY BOMBERS

PLAYER	AGE	FATHER
Noah Caracella	10	Blake Caracella
Alex Alessio	9	Steve Alessio
Alijah Davey	9	Alywn Davey
Mara Lovett-Murray	8	Nathan Lovett-Murray
Logan Daniher	8	Chris Daniher
Aidan Ramanaukas	7	Adam Ramanaukas
Taj McPhee	7	Adam McPhee
William Hird	7	James Hird
Koby Bewick	7	Darren Bewick
Max Alessio	6	Steve Alessio
Thomas Caracella	6	Blake Caracella
Taitum Dempsey	6	Courtenay Dempsey
Cove McPhee	5	Adam McPhee
Lucas Ramanaukas	5	Adam Ramanaukas
Rylan Johnson	5	Mark Johnson
Noah Peverill	4	Damien Peverill
Lenny Solomon	4	Dean Solomon
Jacob Lloyd	3	Matthew Lloyd
Connor Stanton	2	Brent Stanton
Harlan Ryder	2	Paddy Ryder
Cruz Davey	2	Alywn Davey
Edward Mercuri	1	Mark Mercuri
Bohdi McPhee	1	Adam McPhee
Aidan Stanton	1	Brent Stanton
Henry Mercuri	0	Mark Mercuri
Mekhi Dempsey	0	Courtenay Dempsey

FROM THE COACH

JACOB THOMPSON

Greetings to all JHA Members and your families!

It's my pleasure to address all Academy Members for the first time after assuming the role of JHA Coach.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Marty Allison for his years of hard work and for setting such a wonderful example to follow. I look forward to consolidating Marty's efforts and continuing to build upon the JHA's momentum this season and into the future.

Exciting times are on the horizon for the Academy, with a brimming crop of Next Generation members and a renewed focus on putting the fun back in footy.

There's plenty of fantastic events coming up on the JHA

calendar, including two Development Days and our famous Guard of Honour Game – I look forward to hopefully seeing all of you then.

Good luck with your footy commitments this season and until next time, go Bombers!



Jacob Thompson – JHA Senior Coach



NEWS & NOTES

Congratulations: Jacob Thompson

The Academy wishes to congratulate and welcome Jacob Thompson as the new Head Coach of the James Hird Academy.

The nephew of Essendon legend and former Premiership captain Mark 'Bomber' Thompson, Jacob is currently part of the Bombers VFL squad but has been ruled out for the rest of the 2016 season due to injury.

Exemplifying Jacob's determination and dedication, the 24-year-old will concurrently coach the JHA while also juggling commitments as an Assistant Coach for the VFL team.

Jacob brings with him a wealth of football experience including captaining the Calder Cannons to the 2009 TAC Cup Premiership, and is also Essendon's longest serving VFL player with the barnstorming forward first joining the Bendigo Bombers back in 2010.

Well done Jacob and welcome to the Academy!

Staff Update: Georgia Harvey

The JHA congratulates and warmly welcomes Georgia Harvey, who joins the Academy as Program Coordinator for 2016 and beyond.

A new face around the Essendon Football Club, Georgia brings over four years of experience in the high performance industry to the role and boundless enthusiasm that will doubtlessly help propel the JHA forward throughout the seasons ahead.

As the Recruiting and List Administrator, Georgia has taken over Adriano Leti's role who has moved into the Football Analyst section of the Essendon Football Club. The James Hird Academy thanks Adriano for his hard work and fantastic service over the past three years!

2016 - 2017 Sponsorship Opportunities:

The James Hird Academy wishes to announce the availability of major and individual player sponsorship opportunities for season 2016 and 2017. This is a fantastic opportunity to promote your product, service or corporation in conjunction with the Academy.

If you are interested in entering a sponsorship agreement, please contact Brenton Humphreys on (03) 8340 2182 or bhumphreys@essendonfc.com.au for more information.



A WORD FROM WHOOSHA

Hello to all Academy Members and the wider Essendon family.

It's my pleasure to address you from the pages of the JHA Newsletter as Senior Coach of the Bombers.

At a time when football is dominated by the glitz, glamour and intrigue of Free Agency; the sense of nostalgia, history and loyalty invoked by the Father-Son Rule has never been more important.

One-club players are becoming a rarity in the modern footy landscape, as teams engage in hyped-up bidding wars in an effort to lure the young stars of today and tomorrow.

It's certainly heartening to see the JHA keeping the Father-Son tradition alive as the program continues to go from strength to strength with the successful recruitment of draftees such as Daniher, Long and Wallis.

I have no doubt that more youngsters with famous names will follow in the years to come, as they Don the Sash and embark on their own football journeys.

Essendon was one of the first AFL clubs to establish its own Father-Son Academy, and from its inception in 2010 the program is still one of the most envied junior programs in the league.

I have already enjoyed meeting a number of you around the club and I look forward to seeing the rest of you at the Guard of Honour Game later this year.

There's never been a more important time for the Essendon family to rally together, and nothing represents the melding of footy and family better than the Father-Son bond between cross-generational players and the club.

Good luck to all of you with your football commitments this season.

Go Bombers!

BABY BOMBERS NEW ADDITIONS

The JHA is thrilled to announce two new arrivals to the Academy ranks;

-Mekhi Dempsey
(son of current dashing defender Courtenay)

-Henry Mercuri
(son of dual Premiership player Mark).

Congratulations to both families!



Mekhi Dempsey taking in (father) Courtenay Dempsey's footsteps to Don The Sash!
Mekhi was born on the 16th of June 2016.

AROUND THE GROUNDS

2016 ACCELERATION GROUP



HARVEY DANIHER

After moving back home to the Riverina at the end of last year, Harvey has played every game this season as a top-up player for the GWS reserves team. Playing predominantly across centre-half-back, the 18-year-old defender has shown consistent form and has held his own whilst competing against AFL-listed opponents. Harvey is also completing an apprenticeship in carpentry.



JETT BEWICK

Having just successfully completed his first semester of a teaching degree at RMIT, Jett is currently part of the Essendon VFL training squad. After completing the VFL pre-season program, Jett was struck down with a second collarbone injury but in better news the pacey winger is back and playing football at Airport West.



MATT NEAGLE

2016 is shaping up as an important development year for Matt, who has played three games for the Murray Bushrangers in the TAC Cup Competition. The midfielder has also played four senior games for the Wodonga Raiders in the highly competitive Ovens & Murray Football League where he was named in the bests for his performance against the Wangaratta Rovers. The 18-year-old is also working as a landscaper while balancing his footy commitments.

GRADUATE EDITION



JOE DANIHER

The Academy's inaugural graduate, Joe Daniher continues to rise to the challenges of playing football at the elite level. Since making his debut in 2014, Joey has booted 84 goals across 61 games for the Dons including a career-best bag of six against the Lions at Etihad Stadium last season. The young key forward has also earned a number of club accolades including the Lindsay Griffiths Rising Star Award and two consecutive Essendon Leading Goal-Kicker Awards. Joe will be looking to impose himself on the second half of this year as the spearhead of the Bombers attack.



JAKE LONG

The son of former Norm Smith Medallist and dual Premiership-winner, Michael Long, Jake was selected by the Bombers with pick #47 in the 2014 NAB AFL Rookie Draft. Jake plied his trade in the VFL in 2015 in between stints on the sidelines due to injury. The speedster has impressed at VFL level so far this season and narrowly missed out on being selected to play in Essendon's marquee Dreamtime at The G match. A few more eye-catching performances in the reserves may see Jake play seniors very soon – something that all Bomber fans can look forward to!



TOM WALLIS

After his successful recruitment to the Essendon Rookie-List under the Father-Son Rule with pick #54 in the 2015 NAB AFL Rookie Draft, Tom completed his first AFL pre-season under new coach John Worsfold. Tom is continuing to work hard at VFL level in an effort to earn his senior debut.

JHA 2016 Events Calendar

Development Day #1 –	Friday July 8th 2016
Guard of Honour Game –	Sunday August 21st 2016 Round 22, Essendon v Western Bulldogs @ Etihad Stadium (4:40pm)
Development Day #2 –	Tuesday September 20th 2016



JHA FEATURE

TOM WALLIS

THE NEXT STEP

The JHA Newsletter sits down with Tommy Wallis to chat about his journey from the JHA to the Essendon Rookie List...

Q. So Tom, how does it feel to sit here as an Essendon player?

A. It's pretty surreal, I guess - I'd always dreamed of playing for Essendon obviously with dad (Dean Wallis) playing 14 years at the club, so it really has been a dream come true.

Q. How does it feel to be living the dream of so many aspiring footballers?

A. Yeah it's a pretty good feeling...not many kids get the chance to play at this level, so I feel pretty lucky to experience something that not many people get to experience.

Q. Do you think your time in the JHA program better prepared you for life as an AFL player?

A. Yeah for sure, I started with the James Hird Academy when I was 14 years old and it definitely helped to fast track my development. Training with the boys in 2014 and 2015 really gave me an insight into what it's like to be an AFL footballer. In turn, I think that has helped me build relationships with my teammates this year. Without the James Hird Academy, I probably wouldn't have been drafted.

Q. Have you enjoyed playing your footy this season with fellow Academy Graduate and Bombers Rookie, Jake Long?

A. Yeah I get along with Longy really well, I've known him since I was pretty young and to play alongside him has been great. He's a good bloke to be around and some of the stuff he does on the field is amazing.

“Without the James Hird Academy I probably wouldn't have been drafted”

Q. What's the toughest part about being an AFL player and what's the best part?

A. The best part is just being around a good bunch of boys every day and getting to do what I love which is play football.

The toughest part would have to be adjusting to the training load. Going from training with Calder Cannons two to three nights per week in 2015, to becoming a full-time athlete with one day off a week does make you have to change your lifestyle a fair bit. I have definitely become more diligent in my recovery, which comes with sacrifice but ultimately has helped me to get to where I am at this point.

FEATURE ARTICLE

TOM WALLIS - THE NEXT STEP

Q. How's the body holding up so far this year?

A. I thought the body was going pretty well until the last bit of preseason where I unfortunately tore my hamstring. However, with the physios and Nick Kane's (Bombers Rehabilitation Coach) help, I've managed to get on top of my rehab program, ticked all the boxes and since then I've been managing really well.

Q. Tell us a little bit about your first impressions of new Senior Coach, John Worsfold – and has he given you any advice or a key message that's really resonated with you so far?

A. Before meeting Woosha, I'd seen footage of his playing days and he was really tough and a bit of an angry footballer (laughs); but I found that he is the complete opposite person once you meet him. He's such a genuine bloke and he always wants the best for everyone.

In regards to key messages, his continual encouragement of the playing group to drive elite standards and not take any shortcuts is something that's really resonated with me.

Q. Has there been a teammate or member of the coaching staff who's taken you under their wing and has helped guide you through your first season at AFL level?

A. Nick Kommer has been someone who has helped me out a fair bit on the training track. We have a little competition going on at training where we go against each other in any drill that we have to pair up in and he's pretty competitive. Also, Corra – my Development Coach has helped me out heaps in regards to improving my craft, which has been great.

Q. Has your father (dual Premiership-winning Bomber, Dean Wallis) played a part this season in terms of giving you advice on and off the footy field?

A. Yeah, he has to a certain extent. He isn't able to watch me very much as he coaches the Doutta Stars (in the EDFL) but he has always been there for me since I can remember, to help me out and give me advice whenever I've needed it.

The best piece of advice he's given me is to always keep a level head and treat every week like it's Grand Final week. It's helped me with decisions where you have to ask yourself, "Would you do that a week before a Grand Final?" It's helped me to drive elite standards in both the big and small areas.



Q. What are your strengths as a player and what do you think you can add to the senior team when you get your chance?

A. I see myself as a very competitive person and someone who loves the contest. I don't like to lose and I would bring a toughness and competitiveness to the team, which my old man has tried to instil into me since I was pretty young.

Q. Any update on when we might see you 'Don the Sash' at senior level?

A. Speaking to Woosha he was pretty happy with my game over the weekend and just wants to see me keep having a crack and continuously improving, so hopefully I can string a few good games together and who knows what can happen.

The JHA thanks Tommy for his time and wishes him the best of luck for the rest of the year!

JHA MEMBER IN PROFILE

MATT NEAGLE

Age: 18

Position: Midfield

Hobbies & Interests: Motorbikes & 4WD

Favourite AFL Player: Nat Fyfe

Favourite Musician: Beyonce

Favourite TV Show: Geordie Shore



JHA HOT-SHOTS!

Calling all Bomber fans... Have you got photos of our Academy young guns in action?

We want to hear from you! Send your snaps to gharvey@essendonfc.com.au.

The best pictures will appear in the next issue of the JHA Newsletter, so get those cameras ready!

