

JAMES HIRD

ACADEMY

EST. 2010

WELCOME MESSAGE



Hello and welcome to the final James Hird Academy Newsletter for 2015.

The Essendon Football Club has just completed a very successful Draft period that saw the Dons pick up four of the best young players in the country within the top 30 selections of the AFL NAB Draft.

The James Hird Academy is celebrating the rookie-listing of another JHA member for the second consecutive year with young gun Tom Wallis (son of Dean) joining the Bombers as a Father-Son Rookie selection. Essendon chose Tom with the 54th pick of the Rookie Draft, giving the fleet-footed Calder Cannons midfielder the opportunity to pull on the famous red sash just like his dual Premiership-winning father did over the course of his 14-year playing career with the Dons.

Season 2015 has been another impressive year for the Academy, with a stronger focus on specialized coaching and development after former Gold Coast Sun, Josh Toy, joined the ranks as JHA Assistant Coach. Toy provided invaluable support to JHA Coach, Marty Allison and worked closely with young Academy members to better their footy craft.

The JHA once again enjoyed plenty of success this season, with a strong line-up

of events including the signature Guard of Honour Game and three Next Generation Training Camps throughout the past year.

2016 is looming as an exciting time for the Essendon Football Club as the Bombers prepare to embark on the first season under new Senior Coach, John Worsfold and that sense of anticipation extends to the Academy with several youngsters looking to take the next step in their footy development during the year ahead.

The James Hird Academy Newsletter will return in 2016 to bring you all the latest news and updates as the next wave of JHA members continue their journey along the path to potential AFL careers and look to follow in the footsteps of Academy alumni like Joe Daniher, Jake Long and now, Tommy Wallis.

In the meantime, you can get your JHA fix by checking out the all new and improved James Hird Academy homepage by visiting <http://www.essendonfc.com.au/team/james-hird-academy>

From all of us here at the JHA Newsletter, we wish everyone in the wider Essendon Family a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

And finally, as always – Go Bombers!

JAMES HIRD ACADEMY - ACCELERATION GROUP

PLAYER	AGE	FATHER
Tom Wallis	18	Dean Wallis
Jett Bewick	18	Darren Bewick
Harvey Daniher	18	Chris Daniher
Matthew Neagle	17	Merv Neagle

JAMES HIRD ACADEMY - NEXT GENERATION

PLAYER	AGE	FATHER
Jaxon Neagle	15	Merv Neagle
Mason Fletcher	15	Dustin Fletcher
Ricky O'Donnell	15	Gary O'Donnell
Darcy Denham	15	Sean Denham
Kurtis Barnard	14	Paul Barnard
Tom Hird	14	James Hird
Max Fletcher	13	Dustin Fletcher
Joshua Misiti	12	Joe Misiti
Nyawi Moore	12	Nathan Lovett-Murray
Alex Hird	12	James Hird
Tex Wanganeen	12	Gavin Wanganeen
Luca Alessio	11	Steve Alessio

JAMES HIRD ACADEMY - BABY BOMBERS

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



MARTY'S MESSAGE

“Greetings to all Academy Members and your families!”

2015 has been a great year for the James Hird Academy.

On a personal level, it's been fantastic to work alongside Josh Toy this season. Josh's knack for teaching and guiding the young members of the JHA really shone through during each Academy session, particularly the three Next Generation Camps held during the year.

The Camps were a lot of fun for all involved and it was certainly rewarding to see youngsters like Luca Alessio, Nyawi Moore, the Hird boys and Josh Misiti improve with every session.

The Acceleration Group boys also had a standout year - I'd like to congratulate Tommy Wallis on being drafted to Essendon as a Rookie-Listed player, while Jett Bewick will complete pre-season training with the Bombers

VFL team. Well done also to Harvey Daniher, who'll be running around for the GWS Giants Academy as a 19-year-old next season as well.

2016 looks to be another exciting year for the JHA and I can't wait to get stuck into another busy season of Academy footy.

Before wrapping up, I'd also like to extend sincere thanks to JHA Coordinator, Adriano Leti, who has been the driving force behind the Academy since its inception.

Adriano will be moving onto another role within the Football Department but his years of hard work, dedication and effort in making the JHA the finest junior Father-Son development program in the country and the envy of rival AFL clubs is a legacy we are all extremely proud of.

On behalf of the countless JHA members, their parents and Essendon Football Club staff; I'd like to express our gratitude to Adriano and wish him the very best of luck in his new role.

For now, I wish all of you and your families a safe, happy and healthy Christmas period.

Until next time, go Bombers!



NEWS & NOTES

Congratulations: Josh Toy

The Academy congratulates JHA Assistant Coach, Josh Toy, after the former Gold Coast Sun and Essendon VFL player won the 2015 EDFL Premiership with the Aberfeldie Seniors – Well done Josh!



2016 Sponsorship Opportunities:

The James Hird Academy wishes to announce the availability of major and individual player sponsorship opportunities for season 2016. 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 Chris Goodwin on 0434 182 351 or cgoodwin@essendonfc.com.au for more information.



ACADEMY REVIEW

Next Generation Camp #3

The third and final Next Generation Camp for 2015 wrapped up what was a fantastic development year for the younger brigade of the JHA.

Attendees on this occasion included camp regulars like Luca Alessio (son of Steve) and Josh Misiti (son of Joe), while newcomers like Nyawi Moore (son of Nathan Lovett-Murray) made their camp debuts.

Former Dons enforcer, Lovett-Murray, was on-hand to proudly watch on as his son was presented with his Academy training singlet emblazoned with the number 42 on the back.

The youngsters were put through their paces by JHA Coach, Marty Allison – starting off with some tackle-bag work and gathering ground balls under pressure.

Unfortunately, the session ended prematurely for Josh Misiti with the youngster straining his hamstring. His father and perennial larrikin, Smokin' Joe, looked on and tried to make light of the situation – giving the disappointed youngster some cheeky ribbing to bring a smile back to his face.

Luca and Nyawi continued the session, eagerly moving to give the speccy-bag a workout.

kicking technique, before reinforcing the importance of recovery with a stretching session and hot/colds.

The fun-filled day came to an end at the Bomber Café, where the lads and JHA staff enjoyed a satisfying lunch in the company of Italian Team of the Century teammates, Steve Alessio and Joe Misiti.

The James Hird Academy would like to thank all Academy members, parents and JHA staff for helping make each Next Generation Camp of 2015 an overwhelming success – we look forward to seeing you back at the Essendon Football Club next year!



Nyawi really shone during this drill, showing off his impressive vertical leap from his junior basketball background.

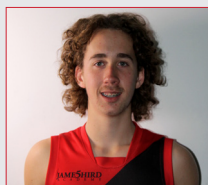
Coach Marty then worked with the youngsters in one-on-one drills focussing on refining their



Luca Alessio



AROUND THE GROUNDS



JETT BEWICK

Despite a disappointing and premature end to the season, Jett turned his attention to his studies and is hoping to achieve a very high VCE mark. The son of former dual Premiership star, Darren Bewick, Jett will complete pre-season training with the Essendon VFL team in 2016.



MATTHEW NEAGLE

Matthew enjoyed a strong finish to the year and played a big role in the Wodonga Raiders' Premiership charge, being named among the side's best players in their victorious Elimination Final. Unfortunately, the Raiders were knocked out of the finals the following week. Matt will look to build on his impressive bottom-age year, pushing to become one of the Murray Bushrangers' most crucial players as he enters his top-age year.



TOM WALLIS

Tom finished off the TAC Cup season in fine style after being named among Calder's best players in eight of the last nine games of the year, including a best on ground performance in the Cannons' losing Elimination Final against the Eastern Ranges. The James Hird Academy is incredibly proud to acknowledge Tom's selection to the Essendon Rookie-List under the Father-Son Rule with pick #54 in the NAB AFL Rookie Draft – well done Tommy!



HARVEY DANIHER

Harvey once again played an important part during another successful EDFL campaign for Aberfeldie Under 18s, as the team secured back-to-back Premierships. The tall defender will be moving back to Wagga next year, after being offered the opportunity to play for the GWS Giants Academy and NSW/ACT Rams as a 19-year-old. It's an exciting proposition for Harvey and should provide him with the chance to play at the Under 18 National Championships next year.

2015 PHOTO GALLERY





The festive season is almost upon us but Christmas has come early for Tom Wallis.

After being selected with pick #54 in the AFL NAB Rookie Draft, the speedy Calder Cannons midfielder is about to embark on life as an AFL player at the club he has always loved.

The son of former dual Premiership-winning backman, Dean Wallis, Tom couldn't hide his joy upon receiving the news that he would officially become a Bomber.

"Essendon has been a huge part of my life," the thrilled youngster says. "I've been in touch with them all year. They told me that they would nominate me but there were no guarantees."

Wallis becomes the third graduate of the James Hird Academy to be successfully drafted onto Essendon's list, following the recruitment of Joe Daniher in 2012 and Jake Long last year.

However, Tom Wallis' road to the Bombers Rookie List has not been an easy one. A highly touted junior prospect, the 182cm mid was considered an automatic selection for the VIC Metro Under16s team in 2013, before a severe bout of glandular fever relegated him to the sidelines and derailed his season.

Wallis battled for consistency throughout the past year after making a blistering start to the TAC Cup season with a best on ground 23-disposal performance against the Sandringham Dragons. The hard running left-footer



FEATURE ARTICLE

THE WALLIS WAY

struggled to recapture his best form for much of 2015, managing an average of 15 disposals across the first eight games of the season for the Cannons.

After a few quiet weeks in a row, Tom received the gut-wrenching news that he had been cut from the VIC Metro Under18 representative squad. In wake of that bombshell, Tom harnessed all the grit and unwavering determination synonymous with the Wallis name and refused to let the flickering flame of his AFL dreams be extinguished.

Tom credits the James Hird Academy and senior Essendon coaching staff for helping him to snap out of his mid-season slump and power home to finish runner-up at Calder's best and fairest count while also taking out the club's Most Improved Award.

He explains, "My first couple of games weren't too bad, but towards mid-season I wasn't enjoying my footy and I wasn't playing the way I wanted to.

"Essendon were a massive help, especially when I wasn't playing my best football. They made sure I was in the right head space and doing everything at training, and they talked to me about what was going on outside football. Marty Allison, Hayden Skipworth and Mark Neeld were all really good," Wallis revealed.

His selection as the 23rd man in two games for Essendon's VFL team seemingly reignited Tom's passion for the contest, with highlights including a 10-disposal game against Footscray at the Whitten Oval, as well as a classy running goal from outside 50 against Werribee at Windy Hill.

Following his VFL stint, Tom was named among the Cannons' best players in eight of the next nine games, averaging 21 disposals and seven clearances in those contests.

According to Calder Talent Manager, Ian Kyte, the 18-year-old Cannons leadership group member was never in doubt of landing at any other club than Essendon after his strong finish to the TAC Cup season.

"Probably the last ten weeks, including the couple of weeks he had at Essendon where he played VFL, he's been really good," Kyte stated. "He's turned his game around to be a hard in-and-under midfielder and he's learnt to spread from stoppages as well."

Calder's season came to an end with a 34 point Elimination Final loss to the Eastern Ranges, with Tom named best on ground.



The aspiring on-baller will be looking to carry his strong form into the new year, as he heads into his first pre-season campaign as an AFL footballer.

Bombers List and Recruiting Manager, Adriano Dodoro offered an insight as to what fans can expect from Tom next year, "He's a left footer, he's a midfielder and a very smart player – he sees the game unfold really well."

After having kept a close eye on Tom's development in the James Hird Academy over the past five years, Dodoro was also bullish about adding another Father-Son prospect to Essendon's list. "It's great to have the son of a favourite in Dean Wallis come to the Club, it's just great to continue the tradition," the recruiting guru said.

Only time will tell what the future holds for Tom, but as the saying goes – where there's a will, there's a way; and the Wallis will is stronger than most.

2016 is shaping up as an exciting year for the Essendon Football Club and the Academy looks forward to tracking Tom's progress during his debut season at AFL level.

The James Hird Academy would like to officially congratulate Tom Wallis on securing a Rookie-List spot with the Bombers – Well done, Tommy and all the very best for your footy journey!