

# JAME5HIRD

## A C A D E M Y

### WELCOME MESSAGE



**Hello and welcome to the third and final edition of the James Hird Academy Newsletter for 2013.**

The Academy has enjoyed a banner year, with a number of youngsters producing impressive performances at junior level throughout the past season.

A total of five Academy members earned State Selection at the National Championships in both the Under 18 and Under 16 categories; while sons of guns, Daniel Thompson and Jydon Neagle also donned the red sash for Essendon's VFL side.

In more exciting news for the Academy, the off-season has gotten off to an encouraging start with the arrival of two bouncing baby Bomber boys! The James Hird Academy would like to congratulate Brent Stanton and his partner Sonja on the birth of their son, Connor, who arrived on the evening of October 17th. Paddy Ryder and his partner Jess are also celebrating the birth of their son, Harlan, who was welcomed into the world on October 27th. The Academy extends warm wishes to both families and we look

forward to welcoming little Connor and Harlan to the JHA ranks soon.

In closing, the James Hird Academy would like to congratulate all Academy members on their football achievements this season. Thanks also to all the parents for their continued support and involvement with the JHA.

2014 is set to be another promising year for the Academy, with our inaugural Head Coach, Martin Allison overseeing the football program.

Thank you for your readership this season and we look forward to bringing you all the latest news from the James Hird Academy throughout next year and beyond.

We wish all members of the greater Essendon Family a very Merry Christmas and as always, go Bombers!

**Stay up to date with the JHA by visiting the following address: [essendonfc.com.au/team/james-hird-academy](http://essendonfc.com.au/team/james-hird-academy)**



#### JAMES HIRD ACADEMY - SCHOLARSHIP HOLDERS

PLAYER	AGE	SCHOLARSHIP
Jedd Clothier	18	NSW Scholarship

#### JAMES HIRD ACADEMY - FATHER/SONS

PLAYER	AGE	FATHER
Daniel Thompson	19	Mark Thompson
Jydon Neagle	19	Merv Neagle
Callum Daniher	18	Chris Daniher
Todd Vander Haar	17	Paul Vander Haar
Jake Long	17	Michael Long
Nathan Neagle	17	Merv Neagle
Tom Wallis	16	Dean Wallis
Jett Bewick	16	Darren Bewick
Harvey Daniher	16	Chris Daniher
Matthew Neagle	15	Merv Neagle

#### JAMES HIRD ACADEMY - BABY BOMBERS

PLAYER	AGE	FATHER
Jaxon Neagle	13	Merv Neagle
Mason Fletcher	13	Dustin Fletcher
Ricky O'Donnell	13	Gary O'Donnell
Darcy Denham	13	Sean Denham
Kurtis Barnard	12	Paul Barnard
Tom Hird	12	James Hird
Max Fletcher	10	Dustin Fletcher
Joshua Misiti	10	Joe Misiti
Nyawi Lovett-Murray	10	Nathan Lovett-Murray
Alex Hird	10	James Hird
Tex Wanganeen	10	Gavin Wanganeen
Luca Alessio	9	Steve Alessio
Alwyn Jr Davey	9	Alwyn Davey
Jayden Davey	9	Alwyn Davey
Will Hamilton	8	Paul Hamilton
Luke Barnard	8	Paul Barnard
Noah Caracella	7	Blake Caracella
Alex Alessio	7	Steve Alessio
Alijah Davey	6	Alwyn Davey
Mara Lovett-Murray	5	Nathan Lovett-Murray
Logan Daniher	5	Chris Daniher
Taj McPhee	5	Adam McPhee
Aidan Ramanauskas	5	Adam Ramanauskas
William Hird	4	James Hird
Koby Bewick	4	Darren Bewick
Max Alessio	4	Steve Alessio
Thomas Caracella	4	Blake Caracella
Lucas Ramanauskas	3	Adam Ramanauskas
Cove McPhee	3	Adam McPhee
Rylan Johnson	2	Mark Johnson
Cruz Davey	1	Alwyn Davey
Noah Peverill	1	Damien Peverill
Lenny Solomon	1	Dean Solomon
Jacob Lloyd	1	Matthew Lloyd
Connor Stanton	3m	Brent Stanton
Harlan Ryder	2m	Paddy Ryder

## JHA CAMP REVIEW: BABY BOMBERS INVADE WINDY HILL

On a sun-drenched September afternoon; revered Essendon names including the likes of Vander Haar, Thompson, Daniher and Bewick once again strode out across the hallowed turf of Windy Hill.

The fresh-faced sons of Bomber heroes from days gone by gathered together for the annual James Hird Academy Camp, an event that invokes fond memories of the past and eager anticipation of the future.

The Camp kicked off bright and early on the morning of September 25th; exactly 20 years ago to the day that Mark Thompson led his team of Baby Bombers to premiership glory by defeating the Blues in the 1993 Grand Final. Chris Daniher, Dean Wallis and Darren Bewick also played their role in that famous victory and it seemed fitting that their sons returned to the club on the anniversary of the 93 flag.

Hird Academy Head Coach, Martin Allison, commenced proceedings by addressing the eager troupe in the EFC Auditorium and welcomed the newest inductees to the Acceleration group.

Harvey Daniher was presented with his official James Hird Academy Guernsey, while proud dad, Chris looked on with twinkling eyes from his third-row seat. Harvey's elevation into the JHA's Acceleration Group capped-off what has been an impressive year for the youngster, after having performed extremely well for NSW/ACT's Under 16 team at the National Championships.

Keen to make every moment count, the boys pulled on their striking JHA jumpers and hit the training track with vigour. As the senior-most members of the Acceleration Group; Daniel Thompson and NSW scholarship holder, Jedd Clothier took the initiative in guiding their younger Academy cohorts in a series of training drills under the watchful eye of Coach Marty and JHA Fitness Coordinator, Des O'Sullivan.

Tom Wallis showed clean-hands in close when disposing of the ball under pressure and Harvey Daniher displayed exemplary foot skills, while continuously hitting targets on the lead. Still recovering from serious stress fractures after an injury-plagued season; Todd Vander Haar also participated in a modified training regime. The youngster's flowing blond hair, adept marking ability and spring-loaded heels reminded onlookers of the days when his father dominated across



JHA with coach Marty Allison

the wings of Windy Hill and soared above packs.

A spirited goal-kicking competition put a full stop on the morning session, with the Head Coach and Academy staff also taking part in a 'winner takes all' showdown. Echoing the sharp-shooting skills of his dad, Jett Bewick claimed top honours; splitting the middle with a number of miracle goals from the boundary-line.

After breaking for a fully-catered lunch in the Essendon Player's Lounge, the boys were treated to an in-depth game-play analysis meeting conducted by Senior Development Manager, James Byrne. James educated the lads on what it takes to 'play the Essendon way' and explained how defence can be the best form of attack out on the footy field.

Legendary trainer and club stalwart, Colin 'Hoops' Hooper then took the boys through a specialised running workshop, aimed at refining each Academy Member's running technique both with and without the footy in-hand. Hoops seemed particularly impressed with Jett's fleet-footed brilliance, remarking, "I think you're quicker than your old man!" The plaudit was immediately followed up with a sheepish, "Don't tell him I said that though".

Finally, the boys escaped the blazing sun and retreated to the cool surrounds of the EFC gymnasium for a short warm-down session, bringing their exciting day at Bomberland to a close.

The Academy would like to thank everyone involved for making this year's JHA Camp one to remember and we look forward to seeing you again in 2014.

JHA Camp Attendees: Jedd Clothier, Mark Thompson, Todd Vander Haar, Harvey Daniher, Tom Wallis and Jett Bewick.

## JHA STAFF UPDATE

The James Hird Academy would like to extend a warm welcome to our newest member of staff, Martin Allison, who joins the JHA as Head Coach for 2014. Marty brings a wealth of knowledge and experience from coaching stints at the Calder Cannons TAC Cup team and the Vic Metro Under 18 National Championship squad. Marty looks forward to working closely with the Academy boys next year and can't wait to help them achieve their footy goals.



## JHA JUMPER PRESENTATION

In August of this year, the members of the James Hird Academy Acceleration Group were invited to participate in a special training session at Windy Hill. This elite squadron is comprised of Academy members from the age of 16 and onwards, who appear to be on the precipice of launching a potential AFL career. All Acceleration Group members were presented with official James Hird Academy guernseys to signify that they have taken the next step in their development. The jumper proudly displays Essendon's famous colours and the back is adorned with the number that each boy's father wore for the Bombers. It is with the ideology in mind that these young future stars take pride in wearing the club's colours in preparation for the day that they earn the coveted red sash as a senior-listed Essendon player.

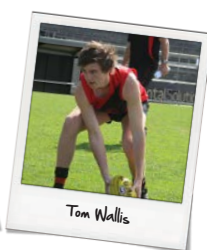


## CONGRATULATIONS



The James Hird Academy would like to extend hearty congratulations to Alwyn Davey, who played in his 100th game for the Essendon Football Club against Richmond in Round 23 at the MCG. The fleet-footed goal-sneak affectionately known as, 'Froggy' has four young sons who are now eligible to be drafted to the club via the Father/Son Rule. The Academy looks forward to inducting the quartet of 'Davey Tadpoles'; Alwyn Jr, Jayden, Alijah and Cruz, to the ever-growing list of Baby Bombers very soon.

## AROUND THE GROUNDS



- Harvey Daniher (NSW/ACT) and Tom Wallis (VIC Metro) were selected to represent their states at the NAB AFL U16 National Championships.
- Nathan Neagle (17) and Matthew Neagle (15) played senior football for Walla Walla.

- Jedd Clothier (Calder Cannons), Daniel Thompson (Calder Cannons) and Jydon Neagle (Murray Bushrangers) all played well in the TAC Cup competition this year.
- Jydon Neagle and Daniel Thompson played for Essendon's VFL team as the 23rd man.

- Jedd Clothier (NSW/ACT), Jydon Neagle (NSW) and Jake Long (NT) were all chosen to represent their states at the NAB AFL U18 National Championships.
- Tom Wallis and Jett Bewick were invited to train with the Calder Cannons TAC Cup squad.

### Thank You Note: Merv Neagle Tribute Dinner & Family Fundraiser

On the evening of August 22nd, the Grand Hyatt on Collins Street in the heart of Melbourne's CBD set the scene for an emotional evening spent honouring the late Merv Neagle. Hundreds of Bomber fans joined together with Essendon legends and a cavalcade of famous football identities to not only remember Merv but also offer support to the young family he left behind. Thank you to all involved for staging an unforgettable night that saw thousands of dollars raised for the Neagle family.



## SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The James Hird Academy wishes to announce the availability of major and individual player sponsorship opportunities for season 2013. 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](mailto:cgoodwin@essendonfc.com.au) for more information.



# MENTOR MARTY MOULDS ELITE FLEET

by Zoe Cotsis

**When Martin Allison speaks; people listen.**

Within seconds of being introduced as the James Hird Academy's inaugural Head Coach, the man affectionately referred to as, 'Marty' commandeered an auditorium full of boisterous bright-eyed boys – most of whom, he had never met – and effortlessly held their rapt attention.

The aspiring football hopefuls watched on as their new leader succinctly explained what he expects from them, what they can expect from him and what it means to be part of the James Hird Academy. Marty never once raised his voice, or gestured wildly to get his point across; he just seemed to possess an innate ability to connect and communicate with his young charges.

A hugely successful coach at TAC Cup level, Marty's niche is mentoring and motivating young footballers throughout the journey to achieve their footy dreams. Judging from that poignant moment in the Windy Hill auditorium just over four weeks ago, there's no doubt that Essendon has found the right man to take the James Hird Academy program to another level.

Despite growing up with family ties to the North Melbourne Football Club, Marty Allison has always maintained a burgeoning link with Bomberland throughout his life.

He reflects fondly, "When I was a young bloke, I used to sit over in the outer at Windy Hill after I played my junior football on the weekend. Living locally, I used to come down and watch every home game for about three years straight; so I've always had a very keen interest in the Bombers".

Marty's affinity with the red and black was bolstered after

playing for Essendon at Under 19 level for three years, alongside Bomber heroes including Mark Thompson and Mark Harvey during their formative years. While Thompson and Harvey would go on to carve out star-studded careers, Marty battled knee injuries and the surgeon's knife throughout his playing days. However, his passion for the game remained and the medium of coaching enabled Marty to not only stay involved with footy but magnified his fascination.

"Once things finished up at Essendon, I went off to Coburg and then played locally. I ended up coaching for two years at Strathmore in the EDFL (Essendon District Football League) and from there I was approached to come on aboard at the Calder Cannons in the TAC cup. That was really on the back of showing more of a focus toward the development of both senior players and younger players coming through," Marty says.

**"...MARTY CONSIDERS HIMSELF FORTUNATE TO HAVE WORKED CLOSELY WITH TWO OTHER HIGHLY REGARDED FOOTBALL MENTORS..."**

After serving as an Assistant Coach for several seasons, Marty was appointed as Head Coach of the Calder Cannons in 2009. It was the beginning of an incredibly successful period for the club, with Marty guiding his team to back-to-back TAC Cup premierships within his first two years in the top job.

Looking back on his time at the Cannons, Marty considers himself fortunate to have worked closely with two other highly regarded football mentors – former Essendon player, David Flood and Calder's triple premiership-winning coach, Robert Hyde.





"I think I'm probably a mix between those two in terms of coaching style. If I was to place myself, I'd like to think that I've taken the best pieces of both of them and mixed it in with my personality and my own philosophy."

Marty continues, "'Hydey' gave me the best piece of coaching advice I ever got, which was that you just need to be yourself. I think if you try to be somebody else or coach like somebody else then you'll get found out pretty quickly".

Regarding coaching ideologies, Marty likes to keep things simple. He explains, "My coaching philosophy is that I like to coach to players' strengths. I believe that if players are coached to their strengths then those areas they need to improve in, will take care of themselves. I've seen it occur at the Calder Cannons – their improvement is far more rapid than if you were to only concentrate on the areas they need to improve".

Jake Melksham, Joe Daniher and Jake Carlisle are three current Bomber stars to have played under Marty at the

Cannons. The impressive trio are beginning to reap the benefits of a dedicated approach to hard work; a mantra instilled and maintained throughout their solid junior football foundations. "They all came here straight after the TAC Cup competition, which was when my links with the Essendon Football Club really started to strengthen," he admits.

After playing such an important role in their development, Marty takes great pride in seeing his former pupils hitting their straps at the highest level. He reveals, "I watch footy now – not really to support my team – but to follow these guys. I've coached 28 players who were then drafted to AFL clubs over the span of four years; so when I watch the Bombers, I watch Jake Carlisle, Jakey Melksham and Joe Daniher. When I watch Gold Coast, I really watch Dion Prestia. When I watch the Bulldogs, I follow the fortunes of Tommy Liberatore and Mitch Wallis. When I watch Richmond, I follow young Brandon Ellis. It's really satisfying when you see these boys go around".

Having coached Joe Daniher at Calder while the youngster was also participating in the James Hird Academy, Marty is adamant that the additional program helped to fast-track Joe's development. He contends, "The Academy definitely enhanced Joe's junior footy, even more so in terms of his physical development because bigger players take more time to come through. I thought Joe was managed exceptionally well this year and I'm sure Essendon will stick to their development plan for him going forward. He'll end up being a very handy player for the Bombers".

Marty's impressive four-year reign at the Cannons eventually culminated in his appointment as Head Coach of the Vic Metro Under 18 team. He looks back on his experiences at this year's National Championships with a wry smile, "It was absolutely amazing. To have access to the 'best of the best' 17 and 18-year-olds in Metropolitan Victoria was incredible. It's like being given the keys to a Ferrari and being allowed to take it for a spin around the block, while going as hard as you like for a long as you like. It was just amazing".

### **"...MY COACHING PHILOSOPHY IS THAT I LIKE TO COACH TO PLAYERS' STRENGTHS."**

The newly-installed JHA coach's unparalleled experience and knowledge garnered at institutions like the Calder Cannons and the Vic Metro state team is sure to prove priceless for young Academy members.

Marty's contagious enthusiasm for his new role at Essendon is clearly evident as he explains, "It's a wonderful opportunity and I'm very excited about where the club wants to take the Hird Academy".

He further extrapolates, "It's not only the Father/Son draft prospects – that's an important component – but equally important is identifying players from other sports in addition to players from overseas then bringing them into the JHA. As Coach of the Academy, my role is to accelerate their progress to AFL standard and that might be a two or possibly even a three-year investment, during which I'll be working



very closely with these individuals. So, from a coaching perspective, that's really exciting."

When asked how he will personally gauge the JHA's progress, Marty is unequivocal in stating his goals. He reveals, "Ultimately, I'll be measuring the program's success by how many players we get to an AFL level and that's not just the Father/Sons but also players we can develop from other sports and other countries. For me, given the serious sanctions that have been imposed as a result of the recent ASADA investigation, if we can find another player from outside the draft then that will be a success in my eyes. It'll make an enormous difference to the club".

Although Marty is still settling into his new position, he has already been impressed with the Hird Academy as an institution. "As a Vic Metro coach and a TAC Cup coach, you get to meet lots of recruiters and assistant coaches from all the other clubs and I would say that the Essendon Football Club is leading the way in the AFL, in terms of offering an academy program like ours," Marty states. "If the Academy continues to grow and reaches its potential – and I'm very optimistic that it will – I think the other 17 clubs will be trying to replicate what Essendon has done."

During his brief time at the Academy thus far, Marty has already identified a couple of standouts in the current crop of JHA participants as potential Father/Son selections in the future. "It's very early days but Tom Wallis is looking good and Jett Bewick behind him in terms of his age. I think both

**"...I WANT THEM TO ALWAYS 'THINK ELITE' AND TO ALWAYS VALUE THEIR NEXT POSSESSION ON THE FIELD. TRAINING TIME IS INCREDIBLY VALUABLE, SO DON'T WASTE IT."**

boys have really great attitudes and they're starting to take their footy seriously. I haven't seen a lot of Jake Long yet but I feel like he can develop into a player as well. I think Bomber supporters ought to be getting excited about some of the Father/Son talent starting to come through," he enthuses.

While wrapping up the interview, Marty is offered the chance to pass on a message to the Academy members reading this newsletter and the new coach doesn't hesitate.

He mandates, "Wherever they play their footy – whether that be in the country, for their suburban team or for their state – whenever they train, I want them to always 'think elite' and to always value their next possession on the field. Training time is incredibly valuable, so don't waste it. They should be always lifting the bar on their own standards and the acceptance of their standards must always be elite."

With an unwavering dedication to hard work, limitless football knowledge and an uncanny ability to relate to young players; it appears that the James Hird Academy is in safe hands with Marty Allison at the helm – a man who has helped mould countless aspiring junior footballers into the stars of tomorrow.