

# JAME 5 HIRD

A C A D E M Y

EST. 2010

## WELCOME MESSAGE



### Hello and welcome to another edition of the James Hird Academy Newsletter.

The past few months have been a busy time for the Academy, with the success of our annual Guard of Honour Game, as well as the second Next Generation Camp of the year taking place over the July school holidays.

Keep reading for a full recap of both events!

The JHA's Assistant Coach, Josh Toy, has settled comfortably into his new role and has enjoyed tracking the rapid progress of youngsters like Acceleration Group member, Tom Wallis, who pulled on the boots in two matches as the 23rd man for Essendon's VFL team.

JHA Graduate and Rookie-Listed Bomber, Jake Long, has also enjoyed a strong return from injury with several promising performances for the VFL side.

The next few months are sure to be a busy time for the Academy, with finals football just around the corner and the anticipation of another draft period looming on the horizon.

Good luck to all the boys in the lead up to what will hopefully be successful finals campaigns across a number of junior competitions.

Stay up to date with the JHA by visiting the following address:

[www.essendonfc.com.au/team/james-hird-academy](http://www.essendonfc.com.au/team/james-hird-academy)

### JAMES HIRD ACADEMY - ACCELERATION GROUP

PLAYER	AGE	FATHER
Tom Wallis	18	Dean Wallis
Jett Bewick	18	Darren Bewick
Harvey Daniher	17	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	14	Gary O'Donnell
Darcy Denham	14	Sean Denham
Kurtis Barnard	14	Paul Barnard
Tom Hird	14	James Hird
Max Fletcher	12	Dustin Fletcher
Joshua Misiti	12	Joe Misiti
Nyawi Moore	12	Nathan Lovett-Murray
Alex Hird	12	James Hird
Tex Wanganeen	11	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	8	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	6	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	2	Matthew Lloyd
Cruz Davey	2	Alwyn Davey
Connor Stanton	1	Brent Stanton
Harlan Ryder	1	Paddy Ryder
Bohdi McPhee	1	Adam McPhee
Edward Mercuri	6mth	Mark Mercuri
Aiden Stanton	6mth	Brent Stanton

### 2015 Sponsorship Opportunities:

The James Hird Academy wishes to announce the availability of major and individual player sponsorship opportunities for season 2015. 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.



## MARTY'S MESSAGE

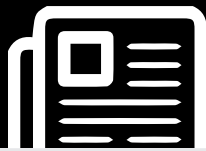
**“Greetings to all Academy Members and your families!”**

The 2015 season has seen several JHA members continue to make impressive progress with their footy. Not only have we had two fantastic Next Generation training camps, but we've also seen Tom Wallis line up alongside Jake Long as the 23rd man for the Essendon VFL team – well done Tommy!

The step-up from junior football to the VFL is an eye-opener for many young kids working their way through the system. Tom handled the transition with aplomb contribution to the team across two matches in the red sash with nine effective disposals in his first game and hitting the scoreboard with a nice running goal from outside the 50-metre arc in his second outing.

I know a few of you are looking forward to embarking on a finals campaign with your respective clubs – good luck and don't forget the JHA Values (1.Family 2.Education 3.Football).

**I wish the rest of you all the very best with your on-going football commitments and as always, go Bombers!**



## NEWS & NOTES

### **Congratulations:**

The James Hird Academy extends warm congratulations to Tom Fields (son of former Crichton Medallist, Neville) on making his AFL debut. The 22 year-old Carlton Rookie also made headlines earlier this season for his trademark thumping torpedo roosts, while kicking out from fullback in the VFL for the Northern Blues.

Well done, Tom and best of luck in your AFL endeavours!



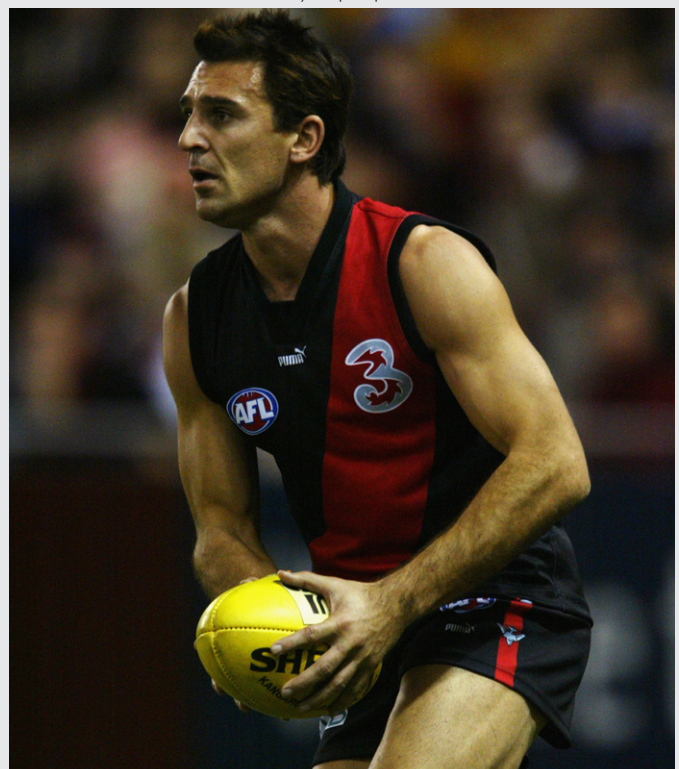
Tom Fields jumper presentation

### **New Arrivals:**

The JHA would like to congratulate dual Premiership star, Mark Mercuri on the birth of his first child, Edward. The JHA also congratulates current Bombers star, Brent Stanton and his partner Sonja on the birth of their second son, Aiden. We look forward to officially welcoming both boys to the ever-growing ranks of the JHA Baby Bombers very soon.



Brent Stanton



Mark Mercuri





# ACADEMY REVIEW

## Next Generation Camp #2 - July 2015

**With the return of the mid-year school holiday season, attention turned to the second JHA Next Generation Camp for the year.**

With the return of the mid-year school holiday season, attention turned to the second JHA Next Generation Camp for the year.

Members in attendance included the likes of Tom, Alex and Will Hird; Luca Alessio, Tom Wallis and Harvey Daniher. Acting as the senior supervisors of the group, Wallis and Daniher assisted JHA Coach, Marty Allison and Assistant Coach, Josh Toy in running the camp training program.

The day began with a special moment for the Alessio family in the Player's Auditorium, where Steve Alessio – Essendon's former Premiership ruckman and current Commercial Sales & Relationship Manager – proudly watched on as his son, Luca received his official James Hird Academy training top from Coach Marty.

With the formalities at an end, the real fun began with the day's training activities getting underway in the undercover Hangar of the True Value Solar Centre.

kicking skills, gathering ground balls, and practising quick-hands with the rebound net.

The Hird boys once again battled fiercely in a series of one-on-one marking duels, before Essendon Performance Analyst, Des O'Sullivan highlighted the importance of speed and efficient movement on the field.

The session came to an end with the now customary hot/cold baths; led gleefully by the older Acceleration Group Members while their younger cohorts shivered through their protests.

*Thanks to all JHA Members, their parents and club staff who helped to make our latest Next Generation Camp a great day for everyone involved – we look forward to seeing you again at the Essendon Football Club very soon!*



*The Hird's with coach Marty*

The trio of Hird boys repeatedly launched themselves at the 'specky bag' with ferocious intent, each endeavouring to produce a Mark of the Year-worthy grab. Once the marking bag had been sufficiently worn out, the lads moved onto other drills focusing on basic

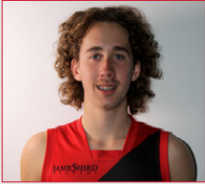


*Alex and Tom Hird*



*Steve and Luca Alessio with coach Marty*

# AROUND THE GROUNDS



## JETT BEWICK

After stringing together a number of strong performances for the Airport West Under18 side in the EDFL, Jett earned selection to the senior team. Unfortunately, the young speedster was concussed just before halftime during his first senior game and missed a week of football as a result. Upon his return to the senior line-up, Jett was once again struck down by injury – this time with a broken collarbone, which sadly brought his season to a premature end. The JHA Newsletter is happy to report that Jett's recovery has gone to plan thus far and the fleet-footed midfielder is looking forward to attacking the preseason fully fit.



## MATTHEW NEAGLE

Matt has successfully maintained some solid form for the Wodonga Raiders senior team in the highly competitive Ovens and Murray League. His strong performances led to the youngster breaking into the strong Murray Bushrangers TAC Cup team for two consecutive matches during Rounds 13 and 14 – a terrific achievement for a bottom-age player. Matt produced two impressive games while playing as a small defender and will continue to work to hold his place in the side in the lead up to what is expected to be an extended finals campaign for the Bushrangers.



## TOM WALLIS

Following the disappointment of being cut from the VIC Metro squad, Tom has rebounded well in the second half of the year and has been named among the best players for the Calder Cannons in six of the seven games. The son of dual Premiership Bomber, Dean Wallis, is averaging 18 disposals and 5 clearances per game while playing predominantly in the midfield. Tom also produced a pair of promising performances across half-forward during two games with Essendon's VFL team, with the highlight being a great running goal from outside 50 at Windy Hill. The young midfielder will look to finish the season strongly playing for Calder in the TAC Cup finals.



## HARVEY DANIHER

Unlucky to have missed out on being selected in the NSW/ACT Rams Under18 National Championship squad, Harvey exemplified the grit and determination synonymous with the Daniher family name by working hard on his game and performing well across the backline for the Aberfeldie Under18s in the EDFL. Harvey's perseverance was rewarded with his selection back into the Calder Cannons TAC Cup team, where he will endeavour to hold his spot in the lead up to the finals.



Harvey Daniher



Matt Neagle



Tom Wallis





# 2015 GUARD OF HONOUR GAME

Written by Zoe Cotsis

A crisp June evening set the scene for the 2015 instalment of the James Hird Academy Guard of Honour Game, and although the night's match between Essendon and Geelong didn't pan out as the Bombers would have hoped, the occasion was still a celebration to remember.

Prior to the opening bounce, an impressive turnout of approximately 60 guests comprising former Bomber stars and their families, gathered at the Crest Room on Level 2 of Etihad Stadium for a fun-filled pre-game function.

Ex-teammates caught up over light refreshments as their young children romped around the function room. The Ramanauskas boys battled a trio of Alessio's with Fujitsu thunder-sticks, while the Hird boys played marker's up (almost at the expense of an adjoining partition wall and a couple of windows).

Proceedings were underway with a welcome speech from the Academy's latest graduate, Jake Long, who spoke with a sense of gravitas and wisdom beyond his years.

Bombers CEO, Xavier Campbell, then took the chance to interview Jake before the crowd of eager onlookers who took particular interest in the younger Long's reasoning for learning how to cook and play guitar in order to impress the female half of the population.



# FEATURE ARTICLE

## 2015 GUARD OF HONOUR GAME

General Manager of Football Operations, Rob Kerr, also stepped up to say a few words about the Academy and its importance to the Essendon Football Club's strong Father/Son connection. Kerr marvelled at the fact that the Bombers may once again have a Watson, Long and a couple of other famous names all donning the sash very soon.

After canapés were enjoyed and the kids had their fill of hearing stories of past glories from their reminiscing dads, the troupe pulled on their official JHA gear (with the special addition of blue MND beanies in a show of support for Neale Daniher's charitable crusade) and filed out of the function room.

The motley crew of youngsters and old footy warriors snaked their way through the bowels of Etihad Stadium and patiently waited down the players' race as the senior team completed their pre-match warm-up. As the Bombers retreated down the race and into the locker-room, Steve Alessio and Senior Coach, James Hird, took some time to say hello to their families before heading back to the team in preparation of taking on the Cats.

It was then time for the youngsters to take centre-stage as they scrambled up the race and took their places at either side of the run-through banner, ready to cheer on the senior boys as they entered the arena.

Everyone formed two orderly lines for the Guard of Honour ... all except for young Jacob Lloyd, who had the Essendon Cheer Squad in raptures as he broke away from the pack and ran straight towards the goal square to kick his mini footy. An impromptu chant of, "Lloyd, Lloyd, Lloyd" broke out among the Bomber faithful as the club's all-time leading goal-kicker sheepishly dashed over and wrangled the over-excited youngster back in line.

With proceedings under control once more, Josh Misiti took his chance to lap up the limelight while being interviewed out on the ground by match-day presenter, Candy Hertz. Josh stole the show up on the big screen as he answered a series of questions to assist the crowd in deciphering who his famous father actually is.



Jacob Lloyd



Josh Misiti with Candy Hertz

Soon enough, the lights around the stadium dimmed and the signature air-raid siren signalled the arrival of the Bombers. The JHA kids and their parents clapped and cheered as the senior team ran out on to the ground and burst through the banner.

Inaugural JHA graduate, Joe Daniher and stand-in skipper, Dyson Heppell both took time to thank the youngsters for their support, offering a few high-fives before refocusing on the challenge ahead.

Although the match turned out to be a disappointing result for the red and black, the success of the JHA's night of nights was undoubted with our strongest turnout yet.

**Thank you to all JHA Members and their families for making this year's Guard of Honour Game one to remember and we look forward to seeing all of you again next season!**





# VFL MATCH REPORT

## FOOTSCRAY VS ESSENDON

Sunday 2nd August 2015

Written by ZOE COTSIS

In cold and blustery conditions on a chilly August morning, the Essendon VFL team ventured out to the Whitten Oval in Melbourne's west to take on Footscray.

The Bombers fielded a strong line-up with established names like Chapman, Hocking, Myers and Dempsey running out in the red and black.

Bomber fans streaming through the gates also found two more familiar names on the team sheet – Wallis and Long.

Two of the James Hird Academy's exciting young prospects, Jake Long (2014 Graduate and son of Michael) and Tom Wallis (Acceleration Group Member and son of Dean), played in the same side for the first time while donning the famous red sash.

Both Jake and Tom rotated across half-forward for the Bombers in a scrappy, low-scoring contest against the Bulldogs.

With the aid of a strong breeze, the Dons burst out of the blocks to score the first three goals of the game before the Dogs worked back into the game to eventually run out 22 point winners (11.10.76 to 7.12.54).

Playing in rapid-fire bursts off the bench, Tom offered glimpses of his sound footy nous where he read the play extremely well and positioned himself to get to the fall of the ball from the spilt marking contests. The JHA Acceleration Group member also showed off his pace with several desperate chase efforts, as well as his willingness to put his body on the line.

Tom finished up with three kicks, six handballs and a tackle, while Jake ended the day with ten disposals.

Both boys backed up the week after to run out against Werribee at Windy Hill. Although the VFL team suffered its second loss in as many weeks, both lads showed encouraging signs with each of them scoring a goal.

*Well done to both Tom and Jake!*

### FINAL SCORE

Footscray 11.10.76  
defeated  
Essendon 7.12.54

