

## Duffin breaks through for historic win



Williamstown's Jess Duffin has taken out the Lambert-Pearce Medal for 2018. (Mark Wilson)

In a VFL women's season in which Williamstown only won four games, Jess Duffin shone like a beacon.

A star recruit for the Seagulls in their inaugural season, Duffin did the unthinkable on Monday night and took out the Lambert-Pearce Medal for best-and-fairest player in the league.

Duffin is a special footballer and a special sportswoman.

She has been a superstar with the Australian cricket team and a star in the AFLW with Collingwood, the team that drafted her, and now North Melbourne, who she moved to in the off season trade period.

Duffin, from Werribee, did not just scoop the Lambert-Pearce Medal, she did it in a canter.

She finished on 23 votes, a massive six ahead of second-placed Lauren Pearce (17), of the Darebin Falcons.

In accepting the award, Duffin put the secret to her success down to sheer hard work.

"I'm really shocked, but happy to be standing up here," she said.

"You don't want any personal accolades, you're more about the team, but when something like this comes up, I'm quite proud of where I've come from."

Still juggling football and cricket, Duffin thanked her clubs for giving her the freedom to move between sports and excel at both.

"Sometimes it isn't easy," she said of juggling two sports.

"Not only Cricket Australia, but the football clubs I've been at, Collingwood and now North Melbourne, have been really helpful in allowing me to do that."

If the medal was not enough, Duffin was also honoured with captaincy of the VFLW team of the year.

Duffin is busy preparing for next season's AFLW competition with expansion team North Melbourne.

"Getting around a new group and shaping a new club, I'm really looking forward to it."

Lance Jenkinson



### IN THE DOGHOUSE

■ The achievement of the Deer Park Football Club to make its sixth straight division one grand final is remarkable and testament predominately to three men – president Mark McGoldrick, senior coach Marc Bullen and benefactor Glenn Allison. There are people like Jamie Madigan, Luke Summers, Mark Lanham and many others who have made ongoing contributions and enjoyed the success every bit as much as any of the players. Chris Stewart and Kwame McHarg are the survivors of the past five and will etch their names even deeper into the history of the competition if they win a sixth premiership medal. Good luck to them.

■ At the other end of the premiership success scale is the Point Cook Centrals Football Club, which will be in the division three grand finals this weekend in reserves and seniors. Pretty impressive for a club on the brink of closure little more than a year ago. The club's under 13s won the flag and Tarkyn Findlay took out the competition best and fairest award. Like all clubs, Centrals has relied on many volunteers and locals to get to this point and Saturday at Avalon Airport Oval will be the biggest day in the club's short history when it takes on Wyndham Suns.

■ The division two grand final will be a beauty, with the two best sides of the season – Point Cook and Yarraville Seddon – lining up to see who makes the jump in 2019. The Eagles and the Bulldogs finished top two in seniors and reserves and both clubs will be hoping for a super successful day at Avalon Airport Oval. The Bulldogs inaugural season has been a huge plus for the club and whatever happens Sunday, president Ivo Havard, his committee and senior coach Ian Denny, can be pleased with their efforts.

■ Sad to hear of the passing of former Bulldog coach and player Ian 'Bluey' Hampshire. The former Cat and Bulldog ruckman succumbed last week after a lengthy health battle following a stroke. Several of his former teammates were regular visitors to his nursing home in recent years and even took in the 2016 premiership cup. He was loved by both his teammates and supporters alike. Williamstown is also mourning the passing of former administrator and Life Member Bob Pearman, remembered by Terry Wheeler as 'one of the best'. Vale to two very special men.

Kevin Hillier

Any news, let me know on email [kevin@howdypartnersmedia.com.au](mailto:kevin@howdypartnersmedia.com.au). Follow me on Twitter @KevinHillier, plus check out the Howdy Partners Media website as well.

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Elation flows for Werribee after Peter Nalder scores. (Marco De Luca)

## Tigers in land of dreams

By Lance Jenkinson

It all goes on the line for Werribee in the Hockey Victoria men's Vic League 2 this Sunday.

At stake is the holy grail, a premiership.

History is against the Tigers, who haven't won a senior men's premiership since 1993, but there's a sense this team is one that is hellbent on defying the odds and writing its own history.

The tougher the task the better for this focused group.

As the lowest ranked team in the finals, the Tigers have been the underdogs throughout September, but that has not stopped them.

The Tigers ended MHSOB's season in a cut-throat semi-final and eliminated St Bede's in a 2-1 preliminary final win on Sunday.

Standing in the way of Werribee and that elusive premiership is Bayside.

Bayside is the minor premier and favourite going into the season decider at the State Netball and Hockey Centre on Sunday.

But Bayside can be beaten and is statistically on par with Werribee.

The Tigers crushed Bayside 4-1 last time the sides met.

Their goal difference was almost identical in the home-and-away rounds, with Werribee's slightly better at +56 and Bayside's at +51.

Werribee scored 76 goals and conceded 20, while Bayside scored 73 and gave up 22.

This final of two well-matched teams gives Werribee plenty of reason to dream.

Tigers defender Ross Cowlshaw shares the optimism.

"As long as we come in switched on and bring our top game, we'll be a chance," he said. "If we all come prepared and bring our game, we're fairly confident."

Werribee has been building up to this moment for three months.

The Tigers' form has been white hot, including winning six games in a row.

Since round eight, the Tigers have won 11, drawn one and lost one.

Over that span, Werribee has displayed a ruthless attack – not just beating teams, but pummeling them into submission.

The best part of Sunday's victory over St Bede's was that Werribee had to find a different way to win. The Tigers were not afforded the lion's share of possession they had been used to in the previous weeks.

Defenders Cowlshaw, Ryan Buust, Jayden Street and Andrew Dearnley and goalkeeper Aaron Durajski kept St Bede's at bay for the most part to ensure the Tigers got through to the grand final.

"We attacked early, scoring our two goals in the first half," Cowlshaw said. "It was probably our defence that got the job done in the end. The defence held up strongly."

Goals from Matthew Skoglund, who pounced to mop up a rebound off a short corner, and Peter Nalder, who scored from open play, were enough to send Werribee to the big dance.

If the Tigers can beat Bayside in Sunday's decider, they will be promoted to Vic League 1.

"Winning a premiership is what you want, but getting promotion is the icing on the cake," Cowlshaw said. "It would be good for the younger blokes coming up."