



U16A

Having coached most of these boys since year 7, seeing them in 16/1s this year certainly made me proud to be their coach. 16/1s was always going to be challenging, but I can honestly say that in all my years in the game I have never seen a region with such a strong top division. This year's 16/1s had the reigning champion's of champions, as well as the champion's of champions from the age group below (the AC Milan Academy U15s). When you consider that the AC Milan academy U16s (a second team from the academy) finished 5th, it shows how remarkably strong the competition was.

As a side made up of almost half U15s, with a few players only 14 years of age, we were certainly the most 'light-weight' team in the competition. The majority of teams we played this season looked to use this to their advantage, by playing incredibly physical games. We are certainly not the sort of team who is going to out-muscle opponents.

My intentions for this team have never changed. Over the years I have aimed to develop a style of play which will allow these boys to comprehensively outplay much bigger, faster and more physical opponents and throughout the season they have shown the capacity to play some scintillating football.

They are now at the stage where they can consistently dominate possession and create the majority of chances against nearly every team they play. Our biggest problems this year arose from physical challenges in both penalty areas, but as the boys catch up physically with their opponents, they will be left as a far superior team.

This was shown on Gala day, where after a winless season the boys comprehensively outplayed Kissing Point (probably the most physical team in div 1), Hornsby Heights U18s and then finally Wahroonga, to win the Gala day without conceding a corner, let alone a goal. Scoring 5 goals with 5 different players in an hour of football is indicative of the way the boys play.

The end of the season has come too quickly for these boys, but they have shown a desire to build on the foundations they have laid for next season. The quality of the football these boys can play has increased exponentially this season and I can see it doing the same next year. They are certainly going to be a force in U18s.

I couldn't be any prouder of these boys this year. I would like to extend many thanks to the parents who have shown incredible faith in the team (and me) and have again been wonderful support.

I would also like to thank Anne for managing the team so outstandingly, for the 4th year in a row. She is as much a part of the team as any of the boys.



Andrew (Shen): One of the hardest working players in the side, Shen leaves everything on the field. Having always been strong defensively, Shen showed a willingness to get forward on the overlap this season that has seen him develop into an outstanding fullback.

Andrew (Stocks): New to the team this year, Stocks has improved significantly over the course of the season. When he joined the team he was an wonderful 1v1 defender, but has now added some real technical quality to his game that has seen him become an outlet in possession on the left side of the field.

Ben: Our captain again took on the role of Goalkeeper this year, starting with a Man of the Match performance against Bannockburn. Throughout the season though it became evident that he wanted to get onto the field and when given his chance he didn't disappoint, scoring in his first on-field start against Kissing Point.

Chris: Another outstanding year from a hugely influential player. It's not only the things on the ball that make Chris an outstanding player. His support play and his cover of teammates cannot be underestimated. His communication has been vital at times and he has shown a willingness to do jobs for the team which aren't always recognised.

Daniel: Our left winger has matured into a thoroughly refined attacking player. Whether taking players on in 1v1 situations, or dropping deep to receive the ball and build play, Daniel always has a sense of calm and control about his play and as always, has chipped in with goals too.

Henry: Having always been a force at Right Back, Henry added another feather to his cap this season when asked to fill in at centre back. As an attacking fullback, Henry is always composed and displays wonderful communication with his centre backs and midfield counterparts.

Humphrey: Having moved from centre forward into the centre of midfield this season, Humphrey has shown immense quality. His low centre of gravity and quick feet make him remarkably difficult to tackle and his movement drags defenders all over the place. He is developing into a terrific player.

Jacob: Playing up two years is never easy, but by season's end you would never know he was. Jacob adapted to the physical nature of the competition quickly and soon began to show his outstanding control and passing. He is a wonderful team player, who works his socks off in every game.

James: Gougi started this season in my eyes as a diamond in the rough. There has never been any doubting his natural ability, but I felt he needed to refine his technique just a little bit more. Having worked hard all season though, Gougi has developed into an excellent player with fantastic technique, who tormented right backs with his off the ball movement, constant pressing and direct attacking, epitomised by his goal (with his 'weaker' right foot) in the Gala Day Final.

Jayden: This season has seen Jayden move between playing as a centre forward and out on the right wing. His movement off the ball has improved immensely this season, as has his build up play. As a result Jayden now creates as many goals as he scores.

Liam: Another player who you would never pick as playing up a year. Liam has again been outstanding this season. As I said last year, he reads the game like he wrote it. His anticipation is immense and you never see him second to a ball. Liam has developed an astute passing game and a lethal shot this season, which made him first choice free-kick taker by the year's end.

Michael (Fowler): Fowler has developed into somewhat of an all round midfielder, in a very fluid formation. Whether it is playing the final pass or winning the ball back, he performs all his duties with absolute quality. His understanding of the game has grown this year and his movement to free other players has become a feature of his game.

Nathan: At the start of the season, Nathan was somewhat underestimated, seen as the 'fast' one. While there is no doubt that Nathan is incredibly quick, he has worked hard this season to develop his technique and has become an all round footballer. An outstanding player to have in the squad, he has played right back, centre back, defensive mid, centre mid, up front and on the both wings this season and has never failed to impress, not matter what the role.

Neil: The second half of an amazingly composed defensive partnership, Neil has again been outstanding this season. In addition to his physical qualities, Neil has developed an ability to begin play from defence with accurate passing and good support play, which has helped the team control the flow of possession.

Varun: Another 'everywhere man'. Varun has shown the ability to play just about anywhere on the pitch. He has played in every position on the left and in the middle this season, always with tremendous results. He is most at home at left back though, where his forays forward have become a constant source of danger in attack.

Justin McMahon

