

**Darebin Women's Sports Club
Incorporated**

Annual Report 2020



ABN: 28780574660

Table of Contents

2020 Board	Page 3
President's Report	Page 4
Treasurer's Report	Page 5
VFLW Report	Page 7
NFNL Senior Football Report	Page 8
Junior Football Report	Page 9
Strong Girls WIP Report	Page 12
Junior and Senior Soccer Report	Page 15
Junior Cricket Report	Page 18
Eight Ball Report	Page 20
30 Year History Project	Page 21
2020 Sponsors	Page 22

Darebin Women's Sports Club 2020 Board

President	Sarah Brady
Vice President	Jasmine Hirst
Junior Soccer and Cricket Coordinator	
Treasurer	Danielle Jacobson
Secretary	Andrea Ludlow
Board Member	Julie Boffa
Head of People and Culture	
Board Member	Natalie Kitzelman
Junior AFL Coordinator	
Board Member	Alison Smirnoff
Media Manager	
Board Member	Mereki Nieman
Sponsorship and Merchandise Coordinator	
Board Member	Tash Simpson
Marketing	
Board Member	Kristin Stensholt
Senior AFL Coordinator	
Board Member	Kelly Farrell
General	

President's Report

It would be fair to say that my third and final year as President of the Darebin Falcons was always going to be one to remember. In the 30-year anniversary of this great Club, we had big plans for a major event to celebrate the milestone as well as a whole year of exciting new programs and partnerships to launch. What eventuated was certainly a year to remember but unfortunately not the way we had hoped.

The impacts of COVID-19 not only meant nearly all our 2020 on-field activities were cancelled but also our 30-year celebration put on hold. Luckily, we have had a lot of time to work on some exciting new additions for our website to celebrate and record our 30 years which are coming soon. We also live in hope that we will be able to get everyone together to celebrate the milestone in person in 2021, a year late but better late than never.

While the impacts hit hard, what arose out of such a challenging year was the never-ending determination and spirit of this special Club. Our community kept engaged online, volunteers across the Club kept working to ensure we were ready to go if and when we could resume training and our Board continued to work hard on the future and sustainability of the Club all while dealing with an international pandemic and a four month lockdown. The resilience of the people within our Club is inspiring and it has been so encouraging to see our cricketers back out on the field as the year comes to an end.

After three years as President, it is time for me to pass on the baton. I will be eternally grateful to the Darebin Falcons for accepting me with open arms three years ago. I have learnt so much from the amazing women who keep the Club moving forward and dedicate so much time and energy into creating a better world by empowering women and girls through sport.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the 2020 Board whose year was certainly not what they expected but a successful one all the same. I leave the Club in exceptionally good hands and look forward to seeing what comes next.

A huge thank you also needs to go out to our 2020 sponsors who stuck by us through such a tough year. A special thanks to the Darebin City Council who continue to support us with our current partnership and our major sponsor Activ8me. A big thank you to Sport and Recreation Victoria for a partnership we look forward to growing over the next few years.

I would also like to thank Meridian Communications, Thornbury Horticulture & Design, Modern Orthodontics, YMCA Northcote, Evado Studios, Ida Sports and MOVE Performance Underwear. We could not run this Club without your support and especially appreciate your continued support this year.

From a personal point of view, I would like to thank the whole Club community for allowing me to be involved for the past three years. Some of things we have managed to achieve are beyond my wildest dreams. The only standalone Women's team competing in the VFLW, a partnership with the Darebin City Council and Sport and Recreation Victoria and a participation base of over 750 girls and women across four different sports that does not stop growing.

It is a beautiful community that I am so proud to be associated with. One that has given me back more than I could ever possibly have imagined.

Here's to 2020 being over and a 2021 full of women and girls smashing stereotypes and paving the way on and off the field.

Sarah Brady
President
Darebin Women's Sports Club

Treasurer's Report

Danielle Jacobson
Treasurer

Much of the activity budgeted for in the 2019 – 2020 year was unable to proceed due to COVID restrictions. We worked with our leagues and suppliers to minimise costs while meeting our commitment to them.

All of our players who paid fees in 2020 were offered a refund, minus league and club costs incurred. A large number of our players and parents donated part or all of their refund back to club, either directly or via the Australian Sports Foundation. These donations are greatly appreciated and will help to ensure that we can continue to empower woman and girls on and off the field in 2021 and beyond.

We are appreciative for the continued support of the City of Darebin. This year we also partnered with Sports and Recreation Victoria, who provided financial support allowing us to launch the StrongGirlsWIP initiative.

Our partnership with Nagle Accounting has continued to support us to ensure the level of transparency and reporting required from a GST registered organisation.

We ended the financial year with a net profit of \$158,107 which puts us in a solid position to meet the costs of the coming year, and work towards financial sustainability. Noting that most of this profit is forward payment of our Sport and Recreation Victoria Grant to be spent in the 2021 financial year.

Profit and Loss for year ending 31 October 2020

Account	2020
Income	
AFL Masters	\$1,776
Fees - Soccer	\$27,020
Fees - Cricket	0
Fees - Community AFL	\$5,420
Fundraising & Events	\$3,965
Grants & Partnerships	\$164,000
Falcons Academy	\$10,170
Canteen	\$1,213
Membership	\$698
Merchandise	\$9,499
Uniforms	\$1,783
Sponsorship	\$30,813
Other revenue	\$6,958
Total Income	\$263,315
Gross Profit	\$263,315

Expenses	
AFL Masters	\$1,320
Canteen Stock	\$629
Community AFL	\$5,357
Cricket	\$816
Event Costs	\$1,302
Facility Management	\$15,263
Falcons Academy	\$7,762
Merchandise	\$13,730
Other	\$7,390
Marketing	\$717
Soccer	\$15,044
VFLW	\$36,296
StrongGirlsWIP	\$9,995
Total Expenses	\$115,622
Net Profit	\$158,107

VFLW Report 2020

Larissa Payne

VFLW Football Operations Manager

The year 2020, has been a year of resilience. Our VFLW team commenced preseason training early in the year under newly appointed Senior Head Coach Mitch Skelly and his support team of Senior Assistant Coach Matthew Skubis, Assistant Coaches Julia Chiera, Roi Boutsikakis, Susan Cadman, plus Development Coach Mat Poultney. A formidable coaching line up which I'm sure would have led the team to on-field success, if we had made it that far.

After a hard preseason and immense planning and preparation from the coaching staff, our VFLW program was starting to take shape. We appointed Todd Kenny as Head of Strength and Conditioning, alongside James McFarlane Head of Physiotherapy, strengthening our program even further.

COVID-19 then hit us hard and with the uncertainty of a season and a return to play timeframe it was looking unlikely that would be able to take the field. However, in true Falcon tradition we were not to be beaten and switched online in order to continue connectivity amongst the playing group and staff.

Ultimately, we never got to take the field but after a year without football, we are still extremely excited to have something to celebrate and would like to congratulate recently drafted Georgia Hammond who is heading to North Melbourne after being picked up in the 2020 NAB AFL Women's Draft. This is a significant milestone, and we wish her all the best.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank Matthew Skubis for all his outstanding work and dedication to the VFLW program after he made the tough decision to leave the nest, and Victoria, and return to Brisbane.

2021 is already well and truly taking shape with training resumed and an early start date with the season kicking off at the end of February 2021. Let's hope for a smooth season and some Falcons success.

UP THE FALCS!

NFNL Senior Football Report 2020

Kristin Stensholt

NFNL Senior Football

In early January we hit the ground running, eager to celebrate the club's 30th year and continue to build on from a successful 2019 season.

Elise Casamento returned as Division 1 Head Coach, with Tom McGuigan and James Ahern taking on the reigns of Division 2.

Preseason saw all the old faces return and plenty of new players excited to be a part of the growing Falcons NFNL senior cohort.

In March we locked in a couple practice matches against local clubs and played our first intra club practice match, then to discover within days training was cancelled due to COVID19. As we navigated through the COVID19 crisis, week by week not knowing if our season was going ahead, we officially received the news the season was cancelled in June.

Training continued despite no season with two groups of 20 only to last a month as restrictions increased and we went into lockdown.

Players continued to stay fit and completed training sessions individually. Coaches also held zoom sessions fortnightly to maintain social interaction and a sense of community.

A massive thank you to the coaches who continued to connect the players on all platforms with training suggestions, videos and social interaction throughout this difficult year.

We are looking forward to season 2021 with the hard work behind the scenes already started with what will feel like an eternity until we play our first match.

Junior Football Report 2020

Nat Kitelman – Junior Football Coordinator

Julie Boffa – Head of People and Culture & Auskick

We started the year well with our Community Fun Day. Our junior coaches coordinated some great activities making it fun for girls to try footy. Thanks to our senior players for teaming up with young girls in the novelty wheelbarrow races!



February also saw some of the Falcons family – from juniors to masters - spread across four rows at Ikon Park to watch the first round of the AFLW season. With former Falcs playing in both teams (Carlton vs Richmond) we had lots to cheer about, and it was a fun social outing.



This timeline best illustrates the year that was 2020 Junior Footy.

Feb 18 – Junior training starts!

March 16 – Training stops. DWSC pauses all official club activities.

May 28 – Goal posts are in, there is hope.

May 31 – training is back on but limited to two groups of ten on one oval at any one time.

June 25 – full squads allowed to train NFNL plans first game 12th July of a twelve week season.

July 1 – members residing in suburbs that are in lockdown not allowed to attend training.

July 8 – All training and season cancelled – four days before the proposed start to the season!

Unfortunately we were unable to hold any Auskick sessions in the year.

We thank the coaches and volunteers for staying enthusiastic, constantly adapting with every change, and meeting all the requirements including:

- If a player is or has been in contact with anyone who is sick, they should not attend training.
- Covid Safety Officers must be present at each session – online training.
- **All players and coaches to sign in**
- Parents/carers remain outside fence line
- One parent/carer to drop off/pick up
- Wash hands before and after training, sanitise hands during if needed, sanitise equipment, no access to change rooms, **maintain 1.5m distance between people**, display posters with Covid regulations, no shared water bottles, no high fives, **no** contact training, 15 minute change over between sessions.

Our coaches:

U18s - Coach Brad Hill, Assistants Jess and Brendan.

U16s - Coach Nikki Clare, Assistant Val. Manager Deb.

U14s - Coach Liam Stephens, Assistants Justin and Dom. Manager Reggie

U12s - Coach Mike Frencham, Assistant Adam McKay. Managers Alex and Carolyn.

U10s - Coach Patrick Healy.

Auskick – Aasta O'Connor and Peppa Poultney

Thanks also to Jackie Lynch on uniforms, Troy Thompson as Junior Coach Coordinator, and those who volunteered to be team trainers.

The girls loved the training sessions they could attend. When the stay at home restrictions were introduced, we switched to online resources to keep the girls engaged. Liam and Nikki reached out to their teams with tips of the week and short videos, we were lucky to have Aasta O'Connor hold online sessions with our coaches, sharing drill programs and insights and Brad held a great series of Zoom sessions with the U18s with special guest speakers including Aasta O'Connor (AFLW), Steph Simpson (VFLW) and Todd Kenny (VFLW S&C).

The Club also created the online **Strong Girls Work in Progress** (StrongGirlsWIP) project, which included fantastic instructional footy skills videos and well-being tips, from our former-Falcon AFLW players.

Luckily, between lockdowns, we were able to hold the **Falcons Academy** over the school holidays. Aasta O'Connor and Jess Dal Pos ran inspiring group sessions for girls aged 5 -10 years, 11 – 14 years, and 15 – 18 years. Thanks to Julie Boffa for continuing this fantastic program.



Our Coaches Boxes grant application was successful and we hope to see these installed through the Council in 2021.

Congratulations to these players who were recognized early in the year:
Peppa Poultney – Calder Cannons, NAB League.
Izzy Baker - Under 15 Girls Representative Program Training Squad

Unfortunately our top age U18 players have missed out on their last year with the Youth team. We thank them for all of their time with the Falcons and hope to see them back playing with the Senior teams.

In such a difficult year everyone involved really tried to deliver the girls as much footy as they could. We look forward to 2021 and hope to see everyone back at AH Capp soon.

Strong Girls WIP

Julie Boffa – Head of People and Culture & Auskick



With Covid-19 severely restricting on field sport over the winter of 2020, the Darebin Women's Sports Club took our mission to empower girls and women more off field than on through the launch of our *Strong Girls work in progress (WIP)* initiative. In partnership with Sports and Recreation Victoria and Change Our Game, Strong Girls WIP aims to empower girls and women to strive to be their best self and importantly, spread the word that practice makes progress!



Strong Girls WIP was launched at the July Falcons Academy which saw Falcons and AFLW legends Aasta O'Connor (Geelong Cats) and Jess Dal Pos (GWS Giants) coach small group, Aussie Rules clinics to over 50 girls, fortunately in that window of opportunity between Phase 1 and Phase 2 lockdowns.



The Academy provided an opportunity for our in-house creative force, the multi-talented Darcy Vescio (Falcons/Carlton AFLW) to get behind the lens to capture the skills and excitement of the girls, as only a woman who has shared that joy herself could do, and unleash these inspiring images over our social media channels.

This was soon followed by the release of the Darebin Falcons online skills series *Falcons Football Fundamentals*. Created and produced by Darcy Vescio, and featuring our Academy 2020 coaches Aasta O'Connor, Jess Dal Pos and Darcy herself, Falcons Football Fundamentals consisted of 6 skills videos, plus Bloopers, taking viewers through the footy essentials of:

1. Marking
2. Ground balls
3. Kicking
4. Clean Hands

5. Goal kicking
6. Dribble



The series was immensely popular on line with over 16,000 views on Darebin Falcons social channels

Go to <https://falcons.org.au/stronggirlswip> or @darebinfalcons #falconsfootyfundamentals to have a look.

The second component of our skills series was the awesome Soccer Skills of the Week series. Initiated during Phase 1 lockdown, Skills of the Week videos were the inspiration of our Falcons Vice President and Head of Soccer Jasmine Hirst and were created by the girls themselves, with finishing touches provided by Jasmine. Over the extended lockdowns 10 videos were created featuring such invaluable soccer skills as the Step Over, the Cruyff Turn, The Body Feint, The Roulette and others.



All it took was some time, space, a phone and the confidence to be assured practice makes progress!

Strong Girls WIP then launched into *Health and Fitness*. Over five weeks, five Falcons legends, Aasta, Jess, Darcy, joined by Meg McDonald (Geelong Cats) and our own VFLW star, Gena Lawson-Tavan, shared five of their favorite tips to keep mind, spirit, body thriving through their day to day routines.

The aim was to share the experience and knowledge these strong women athletes have gained through the rigor of their elite level training regimes, coupled with their personal interests, in a way that was accessible to every girl and woman, and hopefully brighten and activate ISO life!

To take this further, the final component of Strong Girls WIP is *Insight Sessions*, an opportunity for school, community, corporate or other groups to hear directly from any of our Strong Girls WIP AFLW or Falcons VFLW contributors about their empowering journeys in women's football, the skills they have acquired, and their personal stories of fitness and health. An initial session was convened by Darcy Vescio and Maddy Prespakis for the Aboriginal organisation, Djirra, in mid-2020 with more planned for 2021. More information and booking enquiries again available at <https://falcons.org.au/stronggirlswip>.



We look forward to further develop the *Strong Girls work in progress* initiatives in the years to come to continue to empower girls and women to activate their strength, and equally become strong role models in society.

2020 Junior & Senior Soccer Report

Jasmine Hirst

Junior Soccer and Cricket Coordinator & Vice President

As we are all aware, 2020 was certainly a year like no other at the Falcons!

It began brightly with a preseason clinic from Elite Female Football in early February, a huge Community Day with over 100 new and current players, Mat Carriers for Melbourne City at a W-League match and a Strength and Conditioning program for players under 12 and up to get back into action.

By the time formal preseason training came around in mid-February, we had locked in 29 teams, fielding 2 Under 8s teams for the first time, 3 Under 9s, 4 Under 10s, 5 Under 11s, 4 Under 12s, 2 Under 13 teams (also for the first time), 4 Under 14s, 3 Under 16s and two seniors.



Seventy players registered for our MiniRoos Kick Off Program and 401 players registered to play in one of our teams.

Preseason training began and went for 4 weeks for both juniors and seniors before the global pandemic hit and we were unable to continue

Likewise, our Soccer mums began a six-week program in February with 25 participants but it was cut short to just 4 weeks. Once again Merissa Van Setten was instrumental in running this program and providing a great experience for all attendees.



During the lockdown we began a 'Skill of the Week' challenge, where players were invited to submit their videos of them performing a skill which we then sent round to all club members to practice. We had 13 skills submitted and videos produced from these.

Towards June, things were looking more promising and it was announced that community sport may begin again. We were 100% committed to getting as many activities up and running again and as quickly as possible in a COVIDsafe way, ensuring we met all FV and government guidelines.

Training resumed with the training timetable reworked to include required maximum numbers on the pitch and breaks between sessions. A huge thank you goes to Maria Caruso who helped enormously with this working hard to make sure everyone was informed of exactly what they needed to do. We also thank Asahi who donated enough hand sanitiser for the whole club to use during training.

Strength and Conditioning was reinstated and a 3-week program run on weekends to help the players regain some fitness prior to the slated season start date.

The MiniRoos Kick Off program began again on June 14th across both the footy and soccer grounds to comply with regulations. We had 9 junior players (under 14s and up) who took on the coaching roles for the MiniRoos clinic and did an amazing job for the 3 weeks that it was up and running. We really hope that they will continue next season with the coaching roles and will be aiming to build on the coaching opportunities we can offer.



Amelie Park, one of our junior soccer coaches, made 11 Skill Videos for the MiniRoos participants to keep them engaged during the lockdown. Thank you, Amelie, for putting these amazing videos together for our youngest soccer club members.

We had many plans for 2020 which were unable to be implemented such as our junior referee program, tournaments including Girls FC, continuing with the Skill Acquisition Program and coach education. But as we all know, in July Victoria was plunged into lockdown again. We hope to make these things all happen in 2021.

As restrictions began to lift again in October, we signed the provider agreement with football Victoria to run Go Football programs. Planning began on the Go Fives tournament which was to be held in Nov-Dec 2020.

Facilities

The biggest issue for the junior soccer program in the coming years (aside from the current pandemic) is facilities. We have well and truly outgrown the one pitch at Robinson Reserve and a few nights on the footy ground at A H Capp. For pre-season training and games, we shared Mott Reserve with the Northern Falcons and then used L E Cotchin Reserve in Reservoir and Mayer park in Thornbury which we planned to continue with throughout the season.



Our partnership with Bell Primary in 2019 to have their oval resurfaced came into fruition and we were able to use Bell Primary for pre-season training in the summer months. Thanks very much to the principal, David Twite, who has been very supportive of our use of the oval.

We provided a submission to the Council during the Budget process for a lighting plan at G H Mott Reserve. This was successful and the lighting plan will be drawn up in 2021 which will allow for the possibility of lighting to be put in in 2022/2023, creating extra space for midweek evening mid-winter training.

Ground space however, is a real problem for 401 players training throughout the week. We hope to have further discussions with the Council about how to best utilise the space in Darebin.

I would like to extend a huge thanks to all our coaches, team managers, volunteers, the soccer committee – in particular Maria, Jayne and Mereki – for their flexibility and commitment. I'd also like to thank the whole Falcons soccer community for their patience, enthusiasm and generosity during this disrupted season with many donating some or all of their registration fees back to the club. It's been a year that although has kept us off the pitch has brought us together in many ways.

Junior Cricket Report 2020

Jasmine Hirst

Junior Soccer and Cricket Coordinator & Vice President

In 2019/2020, the Falcons fielded two cricket teams (Under 11s and Under 13s) in the NWMCA competition with a total of 15 players registered, 10 of them new to the game.



The Under 11s were coached by Emma Sampson and the Under 13s were coached by Anthony Sibillin.

Both teams had a great season and all players developed their skills. The Under 13s made the semi finals.

Mackenzie Runciman and Lily Sibillin made the Under 12 NWMCA representative team where they went on to win the Claudia Fatone shield. This was a great experience for these two cricketers and we hope that we'll see more Falcons aim for representative selection in future years.



On Melbourne Cup weekend, Darebin Falcons senior women's cricket team – last seen playing together at the Falcons in 2016 – represented the club in the inaugural Cricket Pride Cup, organised by Holy Trinity Cricket Club.

The Falcons played the Holy Trinity Women's Team, claiming the first ever trophy. It was a fantastic event with former Falcon, Darcy Vescio, as the guest speaker at the Pride Cup lunch. Thanks to Holy Trinity for organising this event and we are looking forward to being involved again!



On March 8th, our junior and senior cricketers were involved in one of the biggest women's sports events in the World when they took on roles as flag bearers and anthem kids during the Women's T20 World Cup Final. This was thanks to the Darebin Falcons community who purchased the most tickets to the World Cup final of any club. The night was an unforgettable experience for all the players and undoubtedly a highlight of what has been a very ordinary year ever since.

The start of the 2020/2021 season was delayed until mid-November but the Falcons are looking forward to fielding more teams at both junior and senior level.

2020 Eight Ball

Sally Rees

Head of Eight-ball

2020 was to be the 20th season of play for the Darebin Women's Sports Club in the Women's Eight-ball Association. We were lucky enough to get in a few rounds before the Covid restrictions hit but unfortunately that was it for the year.

The Women's Eight-ball Association are working on changing the structure of the 2021 competition to ensure that Eight-ball can be played adhering to Covid safe practices as well as structuring a competition taking into account reduced numbers of venues due to the removal of pool tables from venues that are trying to recover from closure due to Covid.

We're hoping that an unintended but happy consequence of this down-side of COVID may be a return of play for our Eight-ball team to the Capp Clubrooms! What a 21st season that would be for us!



Looking forward to a better 2021 either way!

30 Year History Project

Julie Boffa

Head of People and Culture

The Darebin Falcons Women's Sports Club has a story that needs to be told and Siren: A Women in Sport Collective is helping the Club to tell that story.

Through a series of oral history interviews with people who have been involved with the Club over its 30 year history, Siren is writing the story of the women who built the Club, the many women who have continued to carry the baton of a Club run by women, for women, and also the story of the key defining moments throughout the Club's history. Among those moments are the foundation story of the Club, the first ever Aussie Rules premiership, the developments of soccer, cricket and eight-ball teams, and the expansion into junior girls sport over the last decade.

The project seeks not only to tell the story of the Darebin Falcons, but also to explain—through the words of those who were and are there—just why Darebin's story is so unique and why the Club is so important to the landscape of sport for women and girls. The hope is that this 30-year history project will inspire and encourage, while also acknowledging and celebrating, the many people who have contributed to Darebin's success.

2020 Sponsors and Partners

Thank you once again to our amazing sponsors and partners – our achievements would not be possible without you

Major Sponsors

The logo for activ8me, featuring the word "activ8me" in a blue and orange sans-serif font.The logo for Thornbury Horticulture AND DESIGN. It features a stylized plant icon above the text "Thornbury Horticulture" in a green serif font, with "AND DESIGN" in a smaller, black sans-serif font below it.The logo for MODERN ORTHODONTICS. It features a stylized graphic of four overlapping colored squares (orange, pink, green, blue) above the text "MODERN ORTHODONTICS" in a black sans-serif font.

Partners



Retail Partners

The logo for MOVE, featuring a stylized green arrow pointing up and to the right, followed by the word "MOVE" in a bold, green, sans-serif font. Below it, the text "PERFORMANCE UNDERWEAR" is written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font.The logo for SPORTSMART, featuring the text "PLAY SMART. SHOP SMART." in a blue, sans-serif font above the word "SPORTSMART" in a bold, black, sans-serif font with a yellow outline.

Strategic and Program Partners

The logo for CHANGE OUR GAME, featuring the words "CHANGE OUR GAME" in a bold, black, sans-serif font, with "OUR" in a smaller font size between "CHANGE" and "GAME".The logo for the City of Darebin, featuring a stylized graphic of a bird or wing in green and blue above the text "City of DAREBIN" in a blue, sans-serif font.