

ORANGE THUNDER TOUCH FOOTBALL REPRESENTATIVE REPORT – AGM 2023

Over the 2022/23 representative season, our club saw continued team and individual honours in the representative arena, which is outlined below.

Team Honours

Our club had a number of team based honours during the season, which included our Mens U20 and Womens U20 both taking out the 2022 State Cup at Port Macquarie, giving our club a rare 'double' championship of the U20 divisions. For our Womens U20 team, it was a back-to-back championship. These players now hopefully look forward to continued success as many of our U20 players now transition into Open aged representative competition.

The junior representative arm of our club continued to develop, with a full complement of teams attending various representative events during the season. After a number of team honours through the initial events, including various Champion teams at WSW Suns Junior Championships in Griffith, plus our Boys U14 and Girls U16 being Champions at the Peter Wilson Memorial Championships in Nelson Bay, it all culminated in our teams attending the Junior State Cup in Wagga.

All teams performed exceptional well, with two of our teams (Boys U12 and Girls U16) being runners up in this state event. Our club wishes to congratulate all players and coaching staff involved with all our junior representative teams.

Individual Honours

Our club experienced the largest contingent of Australian representative ever, with a total of 4 players and 1 coach selected to represent Australia at the 2023 Asia-Pacific Youth Cup in Brisbane. Our national representatives included Caitlin Prestwidge (Womens U20), Hailey Prestwidge and Jessica Wardrobe (Mixed U20), Demi Owens (Mixed U18, forced to withdraw due to injury) and Joel Beggell (Mixed U20 assistant coach). All players performed exceptional well and did their club and country very proud.

In addition to the above Australian representatives, our club had another 2 players who were selected in the Australian Youth touch squads, including Josie Clarke (U20 squad) and Jack Dean (U18 squad). Our club is very proud of the achievements our members are now reaping after their continued effort to develop in the sport.

Our club saw the biggest representation of NSW players within the representative school system teams ever, which saw a total of 8 players represent their state at various level of school touch football.

The season commenced with 3 players representing NSW All Schools at the 2022 School Sport Australia Championships in Wagga. Lilly Clarke and Ava Cole were members of the winning Girls U15 team, who defeated QLD for the first time in many years. April Gardiner was involved in the Girls U12 team who were runners up at the event.

Our club then had 5 players who played for various NSW Girls U18 teams at the 2022 National Youth Championships in QLD. Caitlin Prestwidge and Hailey Prestwidge represented NSWCHS Girls U18 who were runners up in the event. Other players included Hope Gibson and Demi Owens who played for

NSWCCC Girls U18, plus Josie Clarke who played for NSW CIS Girls U18, with these teams making the finals series.

The season of our NSW representatives concluded with Quincy Roberts representing NSW CIS Girls U12 at the NSW All Schools Primary Touch Championships in Penrith.

Along with the above National and State touch representatives from our club over the past season, our club would like to congratulate all other players in our club who achieved regional level representation, either via WSW Suns at the 2023 National Touch League and 2023 Junior Regional Championships, or via the school systems in representing Western CHS, Polding or Bathurst Diocese in CCC, or the various CIS regional representative teams.

I would like to conclude by thanking our club Executive and Committee for their hours of hard work and effort in running our club and supporting our various representative programs. I would like to thank all of our referees who supported our representative arm by attending various events, without our referees, our representative teams do not exist. I wish to thank our coaching staff for all the time they donated to developing and nurturing our next group of talented touch players, you all are the heart beat that allows our representative teams to do all the wonderful things they do. My final thank you goes to our players and their parents, for being involved in our representative programs. The greatest joy we all experience is seeing our players, especially our juniors, enjoying their involvement in representative touch – we are all very proud of our players.

Looking forward to another fun and successful season in 2023/24, which will hopefully see growth in our Opens/Senior representative program, continued positive outcomes in our Junior representative program along with ways to make involvement in representative touch more inclusion and accessible for more of our members.

Joel Begnell
Representative Director
Orange Thunder Touch Football