

RESERVES

The Reserves included Paul Francis for the unlucky Aaron Daly as they took the field for their Grand Final clash against Yarra Glen at Woori Yallock last Saturday. The ground was again in good condition but a blustery northerly wind favoured the scoreboard end as it did a fortnight previously.

Yarra Glen called correctly and had the advantage of the wind in the first quarter but it was Alexandra who were first on the scoreboard with a goal to Wayne Haggis from a 50m penalty. Nat Clark took two fine marks in defence before Yarra Glen kicked their first goal. Lucas Russell was also prominent early for the reigning premiers but the Rebels were having difficulty getting the ball out of its defensive area as Yarra Glen and the wind prevailed. Haggis and Brian Heard combined for a goal to Chris McKay and Alexandra had done well against the wind but Yarra Glen's inaccuracy had been a help. Early in the second, George Steiner's experience helped him use the wind to advantage for Alex's third goal followed by goals to Heard and Chris Wallis as the Rebels got on top. The backline led by Daniel Crane and Paul Francis, kept the Thunder to a solitary point for the quarter whilst McKay again goaled to give Alexandra a 20 point lead at the main change. Alexandra seemed to be able to run the ball forward against the wind and Steve Hedger goaled from a Steiner ruck tap out followed by another to Haggis from the line. The Alexandra midfield and defence tackled strongly during the middle of the third term denying Yarra Glen any run whilst the wily Steiner used his body well to allow McKay to mark and kick his third goal. Yarra Glen got their only third quarter goal at the 17 minute mark and as the quarter ticked away so did their chances of causing another upset. The third has often been labelled the "premiership" quarter and this proved again to be correct as Steiner kicked his team's fourth (for the quarter) to give them a 33 point break at the last change. Michael Heyes and Steiner combined to allow McKay to goal early in the last. Yarra Glen added their fourth goal but Alexandra, through Heard quickly replied. Francis's long kick out of defence started the next goal kicking foray finishing in the hands of Hedger in the goal square via M.Heyes and Haggis. Yarra Glen added their final goal at the 13 min. mark but it was how far Alexandra as goals to Steiner (3 goals) then McKay (5 goals) completed the task of consecutive premierships to the Alexandra Reserves under coach Steve Hedger. Best; Dan Crane deservedly won the League medal for BoG, his strength and marking turned many opposing attacks, the experience of Lucas Russell, George Steiner and Paul Francis stood out in the trying conditions but the inexperienced Chris McKay also marked the swirling ball well and kicked accurately. A great effort by the Reserves, all players played their part and although the win seemed comfortable the task had to be planned and executed. Commiserations to a few players who missed out on being in the finals line up, you were part of it as it takes twenty games to win a premiership not just one. Your turn will come if you persist as personal changes year by year.