

Alexandra wins 1952 Football Premiership

In perfect conditions with the oval at Euroa a perfect picture, Alexandra and Mansfield met to decide the winner of this year's flag. The gate was a record £ 470 and Jim Bradley, Alf Wilson and Wally Nash (Euroa) were given a great cheer on receiving their respective trophies. In a close and interesting game Alexandra ran our winners by six points. The football was the best of the final series, the kicking and high marking being of high standard with Alexandra having a slight edge all day in pace and defensive play. The game was played in fine spirit except for incidents when star players in J.Bradley and W.Reardon (M'field) received unwarranted attention..

The Play (*Mansfield players in italics*) Umpire Stephens was in charge and Cotter, Alexandra's skipper winning the toss, chose the town end. Alexandra turned on the most brilliant start I can recall in senior football- three goals straight in seven minutes. At the bounce, Bradley took Hall's knock-out and sent to Lyn Stillman who goaled beautifully twenty second after the start. After *Tarrant* and *Leehane*, for the Blues and Jane and Perry for the Saints held nice marks, Darveniza with a forty yard dash, passed to L.Stillman and once more the vice-captain kicked truly for a second major for Alexandra. The arial work of both sides was out-standing and after *Leehane* and Bradley had pulled down two beauties Jane, roving well sent to Duggan who led out like a shot, marked and kicked Alexandra's third. Eighteen points to nil. Alexandra's strong start had

bewildered the Blues, but with *Tarrant* now settling down to his true forms the steadied. Mansfield forced play forward through *Arnold* who showed great pace, but Perry and R.Cummings held the Blues out. *Leehane* showed his undoubted class by marking from *Tarrant* and making good position to kick a sixty yard goal for the Blues' first score. Butler caught *Arnold* in possession and sent to Wilson for Alexandra's first single. Twice *W.Reardon* with heady play made the lose man in the forward pocket. *Dolling* shot a clever pass to him for Mansfield's second major, but he missed the big sticks from point blank range with his next try. The Alexandra backs were playing their close football and the scoring slackened as both defences settled down. Miller and Hall were winning in the ruck but Mansfield's control of the air was testing the Saints. Ron Cummings sent to Jack Cummings giving a repetition of his class positional game of the second semi-final. His accurate pass found L.Stillman but *Hill* and *Franklin* forced play out of bounds. *Tarrant* marking and kicking well, repulsed Alexandra three times but Bradley chipped in to mark and sent a "daisy cutter" to Miller whose accurate kick raised both flags to give Alexandra a handy lead of 13 points as the siren sounded. Alex.4.1 to M'field 2.0. A feature of the quarter was Lyn Stillman's dominance of Alexandra's forward line for the first ten minutes and the *Tarrant's* sterling defence for the Blues.

Doolan sent to *K. Hamilton* and his long kick singled. Robinson

was doing a great job against a dangerous opponent in *Hamilton*. Cotter took over the kicking-in for the Saints, and he was sending the ball sixty yard out with each kick. Mansfield, showing grate determination had lifted their game and when *W.Reardon* from a free in front goaled and *Leehane* after receiving from *Patterson* raised both flags, it was level pegging 4.1 each. Honors across the centre were even as A.Hewitt and Butler for Alexandra and *King* and *Arnold* for Mansfield flashed into the play with pacy football. Bradley was proving a handful for *Doolan*. Alexandra's fault of inaccurate kicking in front of goal was creeping into their play, as Duggan (twice) Boote, Hall and Wilson missed reasonable chances for minors only. *W.Reardon* was being shadowed by Darveniza but he was still a power for the Blues. He combined with *J.Reardon* to send to *Hamilton*. A doubtful mark gave him the chance to find *Leehane* and the Mansfield skipper raised their fifth goal with a long drop kick. Mansfield had hit the front and Alexandra's good lead had been liquidated. With pacy roving around the pack, Wilson was in the forefront of the next attack as he hand-balled to Bradley and his long kick put Alexandra five point up 5.6 to 5.1. Within two minutes the same player received a lovely pass from the effective J.Cummings and with the forwards covered Bradley made forty yards and his long kick put Alexandra's sixth goal on the board, this goal was a real highlight. Umpire Stephens was very severe on "kicking out on

purpose” *Franklin* was penalized, Duggan just missing with an angle shot. *Tarrant*, with beautiful marking and a seventy yard dash upfield took Mansfield right into attack but Boote and Darveniza were in the way. Jane marked in the centre against three opponents and sent to Bradley, a long way out as the half-time bell rang. He had his shot but it fell short and at the big interval Alexandra were 12 points up. 6.8 to 5.2. Bradley had given Alexandra an outstanding quarter. Mansfield resumed brightly as *J.Reardon* and *Arnold* combined to enable *Millett* to score Mansfield’s next goal. It was nip and tuck with the high marking and long kicking delighting the large crowd as play swung between the respective half-back lines. *J.Cummings* was using the open spaces to advantage and twice sent Alexandra forward, for Jane to single and Duggan to kick a beauty for Alexandra’s seventh goal. Alexandra’s pace was finding Mansfield out and as they employed more vigorous tactics the frees were going against them. Hall, with strong play helped Wilson to find Bradley, whose beautiful kicking – a feature all day – raised both flags for the Saints, and they had gone to a handy lead of 19 points. It was all Alexandra as *L.Stillman* with heady play outwitted *Tarrant* twice to add singles. A little fire crept into the game as Mansfield tried to stop Alexandra’s run and when *J.Leehane* marked in the teeth of goal he the ball taken away for an infringement, palming an opponent’s face. Jane goaled and Alexandra led 9.11 to 6.2. Umpire Stephens who had done a good job was a little difficult to follow as he deprived Jane and *W.Reardon* of what appeared to be definite marks. As the Alexandra backs,

not giving an inch, repulsed attacks started by *Doolan* and *Arnold*, Bradley was floored unnecessarily. Wilson in his concern for his team-mate dropped out of the play and Alexandra had only sixteen men in action as Mansfield attacked determinedly. *Leehane* sent them right in but Scheffer and Miller cleared two attacks as the siren sounded for three quarter time with Alex leading 9.12 to 6.2. Alexandra’s lead was 28 points and they had played a great quarter. *L.Stillman* had taken a major part in Alexandra’s improved forward work. *Walker* had gone off for Mansfield, replace by *Jewell* and *Dobbings* had taken the place of *Perry*, injured ankle. Mansfield started off with great determination to bridge the gap and it was Alexandra’s backmen who were having a torrid time. *Keating* sent to *Leehane* but Cotter marked safely in goal. *Reardon* was foolishly interfered with after disposal and *Hamilton* took the penalty kick for Mansfield’s seventh goal. It was *Hamilton*’s first a tribute to the fine job done by *Robinson*. Wilson from Hall looked a good move for the Saints but *Edwards* cleared dashingly to take the ball right around the wing to give *Jewell* a chance but *Robinson* cleared again. In a nasty incident *W.Reardon* was floored. From the penalty *Millett* just missed and then *Leehane*’s shot drifted away for another single 9.12 to 7.5. Cotter was using clever tactics as Bradley took *W.Reardon* to one flank then Cotter sent the ball great distances to Hall keeping Mansfield in the bad pocket. Hall marked well but Alexandra was tiring and giving away unnecessary frees as Mansfield finished on. Three times in succession Cotter marked to keep them out but when *Reardon* marked in the

teeth of goal from *Meehan* Mansfield’s eighth goal was registered and the difference was 13 points. Cotter saved again, and with *J.Stillman* giving a great quarter, Mansfield were held off. Alexandra settled down after a torrid fifteen minutes and a lucky bounce allowed Bradley’s long kick to find Hall who coolly goaled to make the Saints 10.12 to 8.5. *J.Cummings* and *Leehane* both marked clearly but a bounce each time was the decision. *Millett* singled for the Blues. *Butler* with good position play received from *L.Stillman* to single for Alexandra. *J.Reardon* to *W.Reardon* to *Patterson* and his long kick sailed through for Mansfield’s ninth major and Mansfield were throwing everything into a desperate finish. *Dolling*’s long shot hit the post at this critical stage and Bradley marked Cotter’s clearing kick with time-on to play. *Leehane* marked from *Tarrant* and the final siren rang out as *Jewell* marked and kicked Mansfield’s tenth goal but Alexandra had won the game by six points 10.13.73 to 10.7.67. Jack Cotter has proved to be a most capable coach. His ability to impart his wide knowledge of the game, the respect and discipline he has gained from the team, have been features of the seasons efforts. His last quarter was a superb effort, one which thrilled all lovers of football. *B.Robinson* and *T.Scheffer* did their job well to make this line a very strong one. *R.Cummings*, although favoring a leg, played grandly against a worthy opponent in *Leehane* and *Stan Perry* (‘till injured) and *J.Stillman* were very safe all day. Our centre line more than broke even with *A.Hewitt* and *J.Butler* using the wings to advantage. *J.Bradley* shared the umpires vote with *J. Cummings*,

both giving great exhibitions in the finals. L.Stillman (best and fairest in our last premiership team 1939) played his best game of the year, winning out against one of Mansfield's top notchers *Tarrant*. N.Miller got over his finals jitters and with J.Boote and M.Darveniza gave great assistance to A (Mick) Hall to enable Alexandra to win in the ruck. Hall ran himself to a standstill with a great exhibition of tireless rockwork. G.Duggan converted his opportunities well against a strong defence. Alf Wilson and Alan Jane showed the benefit of fitness by using their pace to keep Alexandra's ruck work mobile and worried the opposition all day. All of Alexandra's players carried out Cotter's instructions and gave a display that proved them to be worthy holders of the premiership flag.