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2023

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PREVIEW



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# ON THE BALL

## EDITORIAL:

Luke Marchioro

## DESIGN:

Caitlin Dyk  
Cassie Mower

## PHOTOGRAPHY:

Ash Penhall  
Michael Marschall  
Phil Williams

## ADVERTISING:

Tony Swan  
Megan Rees  
Paul Miles

FRONT PAGE: Alison Schahinger,  
Jodie Rich-Nourse and Erin Scheepens  
are ready to leap into the 2023 netball  
season for Gawler Central.  
PHOTO: Ash Penhall

The Bunyip  TAYLOR  
GROUP MEDIA  
Phone 8522 1233  
120 Murray Street, Gawler SA  
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## WELCOME TO SEASON 2023

Season 2023 marks the 12th edition of *The Bunyip's* annual *On The Ball* publication where we provide all the information you need to know ahead of the busy winter sports season.

Continuing its focus on the Barossa, Light & Gawler football and netball leagues, *On The Ball* expands in 2023 with its own dedicated women's football section for the first time as the BL&GW continues to grow and push players to the next level.

As well as featuring the Adelaide Plains sporting scene, *On The Ball* also dives into other winter sports in the area with basketball, soccer and hockey all featured.

As the BL&G's unofficial 10th and arguably most important team, the umpires will also feature for the first time as we chat with the Barossa, Light & Gawler Umpires Association ahead of the 2023.

*On The Ball* continues its commitment to providing the most in-depth coverage for local sports across South Australia because at *The Bunyip* we take sports as seriously as you do.



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# BAROSSA, LIGHT & GAWLER FOOTBALL AND NETBALL

## ROUND 1 *Apr 22*

Tanunda v Barossa District  
South Gawler v Willaston  
Kapunda v Freeling  
Nuriootpa v Angaston  
**BYE:** Gawler Central

**ANZAC  
ROUND**

**APRIL 25**

## ROUND 2 *Apr 29*

Freeling v Nuriootpa  
Willaston v Kapunda  
Barossa District v South Gawler  
Gawler Central v Tanunda  
**BYE:** Angaston

## ROUND 3 *May 6*

South Gawler v Gawler Central  
Kapunda v Barossa District  
Nuriootpa v Willaston  
Angaston v Freeling  
**BYE:** Tanunda

## ROUND 4 *May 13*

Willaston v Angaston  
Barossa District v Nuriootpa  
Gawler Central v Kapunda  
Tanunda v South Gawler  
**BYE:** Freeling

## ROUND 5 *May 20*

Kapunda v Tanunda  
Nuriootpa v Gawler Central  
Angaston v Barossa District  
Freeling v Willaston  
**BYE:** South Gawler

## ROUND 6 *May 27*

Gawler Central v Angaston  
Barossa District v Freeling  
Tanunda v Nuriootpa  
South Gawler v Kapunda  
**BYE:** Willaston

## ROUND 7 *Jun 3*

Nuriootpa v South Gawler  
Angaston v Tanunda  
Freeling v Gawler Central  
Willaston v Barossa District  
**BYE:** Kapunda

## JUNE LONG WEEKEND *June 10*

## ROUND 8 *Jun 17*

Angaston v Kapunda  
Freeling v South Gawler  
Willaston v Tanunda  
Gawler Central v Barossa District  
**BYE:** Nuriootpa

## ROUND 9 *Jun 24*

Gawler Central v Willaston  
Tanunda v Freeling  
South Gawler v Angaston  
Kapunda v Nuriootpa  
**BYE:** Barossa District

## ROUND 10 *Jul 1*

Gawler Central v South Gawler  
Barossa District v Kapunda  
Willaston v Nuriootpa  
Freeling v Angaston  
**BYE:** Tanunda

## ZONE CHAMPIONSHIPS *July 8-9 held in Barossa*

## ROUND 11 *Jul 15*

Barossa District v Tanunda  
Willaston v South Gawler  
Freeling v Kapunda  
Angaston v Nuriootpa  
**BYE:** Gawler Central

**INDIGENOUS  
ROUND**

## ROUND 12 *Jul 22*

Nuriootpa v Freeling  
Kapunda v Willaston  
South Gawler v Barossa District  
Tanunda v Gawler Central  
**BYE:** Angaston

## ROUND 13 *Jul 29*

Angaston v Willaston  
Nuriootpa v Barossa District  
Kapunda v Gawler Central  
South Gawler v Tanunda  
**BYE:** Freeling

## ROUND 14 *Aug 5*

Tanunda v Kapunda  
Gawler Central v Nuriootpa  
Barossa District v Angaston  
Willaston v Freeling  
**BYE:** South Gawler

## ROUND 15 *Aug 12*

Angaston v Gawler Central  
Freeling v Barossa District  
Nuriootpa v Tanunda  
Kapunda v South Gawler  
**BYE:** Willaston

## ROUND 16 *Aug 19*

South Gawler v Nuriootpa  
Gawler Central v Freeling  
Tanunda v Angaston  
Barossa District v Willaston  
**BYE:** Kapunda

## ROUND 17 *Aug 26*

Barossa District v Gawler Central  
Tanunda v Willaston  
South Gawler v Freeling  
Kapunda v Angaston  
**BYE:** Nuriootpa

## ROUND 18 *Sep 2*

Willaston v Gawler Central  
Freeling v Tanunda  
Angaston v South Gawler  
Nuriootpa v Kapunda  
**BYE:** Barossa District

## 1ST SEMI FINAL *September 10 - Gawler Central*

## 2ND SEMI FINAL *September 9 - Nuriootpa*

## PRELIMINARY FINAL *September 16 - Kapunda*

## GRAND FINAL **BAROSSA DISTRICT HOST** *September 23 - TBD*



## Premiership race a wide open affair

AFTER four different premiers in the past four seasons, the Barossa, Light & Gawler Football competition remains wide open as we head into the 2023 season.

Last year's premier Nuriootpa produced an excellent finals campaign before downing red-hot favourites South Gawler in the grand final to claim their first premiership since 2018.

Can Nuri and coach Kyle Jenner defend their crown and become the first back-to-back premiers in the BL&G since Barossa District in 2016 and 2017, or will a new

champion emerge from the pack?

South Gawler have been perennial contenders in the past three years, making three consecutive grand finals and will be hoping to add a second premiership to the club's recent success.

Can last year's vanquished finalists Tanunda and Barossa District improve on their position and take the next leap towards premiership success?

Three clubs have new coaches with Angaston, Willaston and Gawler Central all having new men at the helm. Could one

of these teams produce a surprise and challenge for the flag in 2023?

With the competition wide open, all nine teams will enter the season full of confidence and with belief that premiership success is an achievable dream.

With new coaches and new players set to change the landscape, the 2023 season will be a wild and unpredictable ride showing why the BL&G is one of the best league's in South Australia and in 2023, *The Bunyip* will get you closer to the action than ever before.



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#### COACH »

Craig Hadden

#### MOST RECENT PREMIERSHIP » 2003

#### HOME GROUND »

Angaston Oval

#### SEASON FIXTURE

<b>Round 1</b>	April 25
at Nuriootpa (ANZAC Round)	
<b>Round 2</b>	April 29
BYE	
<b>Round 3</b>	May 6
v Freeling	
<b>Round 4</b>	May 13
at Willaston	
<b>Round 5</b>	May 20
v Barossa District	
<b>Round 6</b>	May 27
at Gawler Central	
<b>Round 7</b>	Jun 3
v Tanunda	
<b>Long weekend</b>	June 10
BYE	
<b>Round 8</b>	Jun 17
v Kapunda	
<b>Round 9</b>	June 24
at South Gawler	
<b>Round 10</b>	July 1
at Freeling	
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(held in Barossa)	
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BYE	
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v Gawler Central	
<b>Round 16</b>	Aug 19
at Tanunda	
<b>Round 17</b>	Aug 26
at Kapunda	
<b>Round 18</b>	Sep 2
v South Gawler	



## Old and new have Panthers primed for finals tilt

ANGASTON is going back to the future as it looks to break its two-year finals drought, appointing former coach and club stalwart Craig Hadden to the role of senior coach for the 2023 season.

Hadden, who played more than 300 games for the Panthers and led them to a grand final appearance as a coach in 2009, returns to the club after a recent stint with Central District. The club stalwart says that he is returning to Angaston a more experienced coach and looking to share that wisdom with a new crop of players.

"Since the last time I coached, I have learnt a lot and I probably

have a different view on how the game is played now," Hadden said.

"I am hoping to bring a few different things to the club that I have learnt over the journey and I am coming back more experienced and hopefully imparting that on the group."

While Hadden has returned to the club, he has been joined by Steve Rusca and James Papronty, with the pair set to play a key part in Angaston's push to end a two-year finals drought.

"We know what Steve can do, he is a quality player and he has come back in really great nick especially after having not

played at any level last year," he said.

"James Papronty has come back to us after a couple of years as well, so we are really pleased with both of those guys."

As well as the returning pair, Angaston has also added a pair of reliable defenders with Port Districts Luke McNerney and former Port Magpies SANFL player Tom Corcoran helping offset the departure of some younger local players due to work commitments.

"Tom is a quality player and he has been really good and fit in really nicely," Hadden said.

"Luke McNerney has come over from Port Districts so he will be a defender for us and we're hoping that the gains outweigh the losses."

While the recruits have taken most of the attention, Angaston's improving core of young homegrown players will also be a key part in shaping the club's fortunes in 2023.

"Both the Antonie boys (Jayden and Ben) have had really good pre-seasons," Hadden said.

"They have been out to almost every session and they are ready to take some games by the scruff of neck this season."

"Myles Harvey has also been training well and its some of the locals and young fellas who have been out most and making an impact."

With the mix of youth and experience, Hadden is hopeful that his side can improve on its fifth-place finish and challenge not only for the finals but for the premiership.

"It's been a really good pre-season, we started pre-Christmas so it's been a long time and we can't wait to get into some games," he said.

"I think we will stack up well and our midfield will be as good as anyone going around in the competition."

"We just have to try to convert into decent scores and defend a bit better than we have over the last couple of years but hopefully we can be in the thick of it at the end of the season."



Angaston's Myles Harvey.

## KEY PLAYERS

### TOM CORCORAN

The newest member of the Angaston squad, Corcoran shapes as a key to the Panthers chance of making a deep run in season 2023.

The reliable defender joins the club after claiming a Division One premiership in the Adelaide Footy League with Port Districts and also having spent the past four years involved in Port Adelaide's SANFL squad.

Having played 44 games at SANFL level, 27-year-old Corcoran will provide valuable experience and support to Angaston's talented core of young players.

Corcoran's versatility was his strength with Port at SANFL level and coach Craig Hadden will be calling on it as a key part of Angaston's plans.

### STEVE RUSCA

A classy midfielder, Rusca returns to the Panthers having last played for the club during the Covid affected 2020 season.

Despite not playing football at any level in 2022, Rusca has returned in excellent shape and looks set to play a key role in the midfield for Angaston.

"We know what Steve can do, he is a quality player and he has come back in really great nick," coach Craig Hadden said.

Rusca will provide experience around Angaston's core of young players and will play a key role as the Panthers push for finals.



Angaston's Steve Rusca.



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**COACH »**

Eric Kells

**MOST RECENT****PREMIERSHIP » 2017****HOME GROUND »**

Williamstown/ Lyndoch Oval

**SEASON FIXTURE**

<b>Round 1</b>	April 22
at Tanunda (ANZAC Round)	
<b>Round 2</b>	April 29
v South Gawler	
<b>Round 3</b>	May 6
at Kapunda	
<b>Round 4</b>	May 13
v Nuriootpa	
<b>Round 5</b>	May 20
at Angaston	
<b>Round 6</b>	May 27
v Freeling	
<b>Round 7</b>	Jun 3
at Willaston	
<b>Long weekend</b>	June 10
BYE	
<b>Round 8</b>	Jun 17
at Gawler Central	
<b>Round 9</b>	June 24
BYE	
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v Kapunda	
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(held in Barossa)	
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<b>Round 15</b>	Aug 12
at Freeling	
<b>Round 16</b>	Aug 19
v Willaston	
<b>Round 17</b>	Aug 26
v Gawler Central	
<b>Round 18</b>	Sep 2
BYE	



Barossa District's Darren Shillabeer.

## Barossa look to build on finals appearance

FRESH off a finals appearance last season, Barossa District is looking to continue its improvement in 2023 by winning a final for the first time since 2019.

The Bulldogs responded after disappointing campaigns in 2020 and 2021 by making the elimination final against Tanunda in 2022, where a winnable game slipped through their fingers.

Senior Football Operations manager Simon Wills said that the Bulldogs were looking to build on their successful campaign.

"We are looking good, we have had a pretty good pre-season," Wills said.

"We have plenty of numbers out on the track and we are probably looking stronger this year than we were last year."

Barossa has been among the more active clubs in recruiting across the region as they look to build their depth to challenge the top sides in the competition.

The Bulldogs have added a mix of new talent while also having some players return to the club from stints with Central District.

"Liam Tapper and Ryan Nelson have returned from Central District along with a couple of other youngsters guys," Wills said.

"We have added Lachlan Webb from Payneham and Jake Mazzone from Hectorville while Brayden Owen will split his time between Central District and us when he isn't picked to play for them."

The additions have added

depth and quality to the Bulldogs squad who will also return Brendan Dew, but will be forced to cover for the loss of Ryan Grey who has moved to Goodwood in the Adelaide Footy League.

Wills also said the club's youth was ready to step up and fill the void as they try to push into premiership contention.

"Jake Tobin is one of our young guys who has had a really good summer," he said.

"We have just been really even across the field and we have blooded a fair bit of youth in the past few years.

"A lot of these kids are now at 30 or 40 games now and with a bit more maturity we are looking forward to seeing them in action for us this year."

As for their goals for the season, the Bulldogs are hoping to play finals and give themselves a shot at premiership success.

"Once you get there anything can happen, we saw that last year in the elimination final if we kick a bit straighter it could've been a different story," he said.

"Our expectation is to finish top four again, play finals and when we get there anything can happen."

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## KEY FIXTURES

### ROUND 2 vs South Gawler

An early season test for the Bulldogs as they take on last year's grand finalist South Gawler in their first home game of the season.

The round two match shapes a key test for coach Eric Kells' men after the Bulldogs were humbled twice by the Lions last season.

Barossa fell by 64 points to South in round nine before bridging that gap slightly, defeated by 16 points in round 18.

If the Bulldogs are to prove themselves as serious finals and premiership contenders, the round two clash on their home deck provides a perfect opportunity.

### ROUND 11 vs Tanunda

A rematch of last year's elimination final, Barossa District will be out for revenge when they take on Tanunda at home in round 11.

The Bulldogs fell by 39 points in last year's final and will be looking to reverse the fortunes in a home clash against the Magpies.

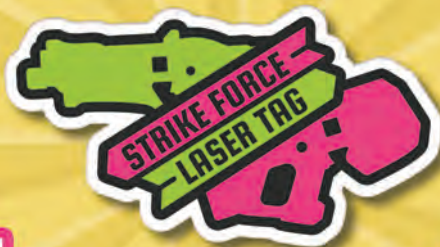
With the match coming after the bye weekend for the Zone Championships, the contest between two potential finalists looms large as a win could build big momentum for Barossa leading into the second half of the year.



Barossa Districts Alex Arthur.

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## COACH »

Johnathon Ross

## MOST RECENT

PREMIERSHIP » 1994

## HOME GROUND »

Emmetts Park

## SEASON FIXTURE

<b>Round 1</b>	April 22
at Kapunda (ANZAC Round)	
<b>Round 2</b>	April 29
v Nuriootpa	
<b>Round 3</b>	May 6
at Angaston	
<b>Round 4</b>	May 13
BYE	
<b>Round 5</b>	May 20
v Willaston	
<b>Round 6</b>	May 27
at Barossa District	
<b>Round 7</b>	Jun 3
v Gawler Central	
<b>Long weekend</b>	June 10
BYE	
<b>Round 8</b>	Jun 17
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<b>Round 16</b>	Aug 19
at Gawler Central	
<b>Round 17</b>	Aug 26
at South Gawler	
<b>Round 18</b>	Sep 2
v Tanunda	



# Improvement on the agenda for Redlegs

AFTER breaking its long losing streak midway through last season, Freeling enters the 2023 BL&G season full of confidence.

With senior coach Johnathon Ross set to enter his second season and strong cohesion within its playing group, the Redlegs looks set to build on its two win year in 2022.

While wins against Willaston and Gawler Central were the highlights for the year, Freeling also turned in strong performances against a number of other sides across the competition.

The Redlegs still have a way to go to challenge the top sides in the competition, but Freeling coach Johnathon Ross says he believes the club definitely has the right man.

"We won two games and probably lost seven or eight games by less than four goals,

we made great strides," Ross said.

"I don't think we are that far away and in terms of work over pre-season, things should be a little more exciting in what we can achieve in terms of results."

Freeling has been able to maintain most of its squad for the upcoming season while also adding some quality talent who can help the Redlegs be more competitive in 2023.

"Sam Tylor is coming over from North Haven with Aaron Insley," Ross said.

"I played with Sam at the Port Magpies at SANFL level and Tyler Westley comes from Kersbrook who I played with as well, while we have also added Harry Lienert who is a young footballer who looks like he has a bright future."

Since joining Freeling, Ross has endeared himself with the players with a coaching

style that looks set to be more attacking.

"Last year, we were more controlled and this year we want to be quicker and use the corridor a bit more," he said.

"The boys have been able to execute that and have had some success as we have been able to see the results in our trial games."

Ross did not make any big predictions for Freeling ahead of the season but firmly expects his side to be more competitive across the board.

"We want to show continued improvement and close the gap between our best and our worst," he said.

"If we can do that coupled with continual improvement across the board in our good young brigade so that improvement over the last 15 months has shown us plenty of good sign."



Freeling's Jack Hancock.

## KEY FIXTURES

### ROUND 1 at Kapunda

A mouth-watering clash against rivals Kapunda awaits Freeling in round one, with the two sides set to do battle for the Mickan/Shanahan Cup at Dutton Park.

Despite finishing the year in good form and snapping its long losing streak against Willaston, the Redlegs were unable to topple their neighbours in both matches in 2022.

Freeling fell by 12 points in round three and 15 points in round 11, coming close to beating Kapunda for the first time since 2019.

If Freeling are to continue to improve and shock a few sides in 2023, a round one win against their traditional rivals would be the perfect way to start.

### ROUND 5 vs Willaston

Having not recorded a win in close to three years, Freeling snapped their long drought with a 44-point over Willaston in round 10 last year.

It was a rather remarkable effort for the Redlegs, given they were defeated by 88 points against the Donnybrooks in round one.

The 132-point turnaround showed the drastic improvement in Freeling's group and gave the Redlegs motivation for the rest of the year.

They will get a chance to make it two wins in a row against Willaston, when they host the Donnys in round five and continue to show the improvement that was on display last year.

It won't be easy against a Willaston side with a new coach and a group of players who will be eager to right the wrongs of 12 months prior.



Freeling's Jonathan Ross.

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**GAWLER CENTRAL**  
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#### COACH »

Shane Dawe

#### MOST RECENT PREMIERSHIP » 2020

**HOME GROUND »**  
Gawler Oval

#### SEASON FIXTURE

<b>Round 1</b>	April 22
BYE (ANZAC Round)	
<b>Round 2</b>	April 29
v Tanunda	
<b>Round 3</b>	May 6
at South Gawler	
<b>Round 4</b>	May 13
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at Nuriootpa	
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<b>Round 13</b>	July 29
at Kapunda	
<b>Round 14</b>	Aug 5
v Nuriootpa	
<b>Round 15</b>	Aug 12
at Angaston	
<b>Round 16</b>	Aug 19
v Freeling	
<b>Round 17</b>	Aug 26
at Barossa District	
<b>Round 18</b>	Sep 2
at Willaston	



# Tigers seek improvement, stability under new coach Dawe

AFTER an injury-marred 2022 campaign, new Gawler Central coach Shane Dawe is hopeful his side can make a leap and improve in 2023.

With several key players such as Charlie Molyneux and Kyle Thorogood enjoying full pre-seasons, Dawe was hopeful his side would be able to make strides up the ladder.

"We have those players returning from injury who missed most of the year so they are all back, fit and ready and raring to go," he said.

"We are really keen to see how we perform, it has been a healthy pre-season for us which is a big positive for this time of year given the headaches we have had the last couple of years."

A long time servant of the football club, Dawe steps into the senior coaching post after serving as an assistant and then interim coach in the 2022 season.

After a tumultuous two years since the premierships season of 2020, Dawe said his focus was on bringing fun and stability back into the group.

"I think I can bring stability and also giving the enjoyment back to footy and that's an area where I can bring some real positivity," he said.

"We have changed a few things up on how we want to approach the game and we want to be more attacking with our style as well.

"So with that in mind, our key focus in the pre-season has been fitness and skill level and getting that to the required level for A-grade football."

The Tigers have been active in their recruiting, looking to fill the holes left by the departing Brett Kennedy and Jamie Wegener while also looking to bolster their depth as well.

"Last year at times we had 14 or 15 players in the twos so we will definitely be stronger and have more quality this season," he said.

"We have added some midfielders including Jacob Shepperd and Riley Mitchell from Elizabeth as well as Jamie Coff who is our 200cm forward

who's been impressive."

In pairing Coff with team of the year ruckman Joe Botton, the Tigers have a potent pairing and one Dawe hopes to use throughout the year.

"One hundred per cent, we will use them both forward at times," he said.

"We aren't blessed for height but we saw at times how good Joe can be forward last year so it's something we can use at stages for sure."

As for his side's expectation, Dawe said he was putting a cap on what they could achieve but said he was focusing on building consistency.

"Last year, we would win a game then lose a game but we want to be consistent and stay in games for as long as we can," he said.

"I never want to put a cap on what we can achieve but we just want to be consistent and delivering our best every Saturday."



## KEY PLAYERS

### JOE BOTTIN

No big man had more impact across the Barossa, Light & Gawler Football Association than Gawler Central ruckman Joe Bottin.

Bottin was one of the standouts for Central last year taking the lead ruck honours in the BL&G team of the year, stamping himself as one of the league's most influential big men.

With new recruits joining the Gawler Central midfield, Bottin's role in the ruck will be crucial as they look to improve on last year's performance.

As well as his presence in the ruck, Bottin's leadership will also be important with the talented big man having been a key member of the Tigers leadership group.

### CHARLIE MOLYNEUX

The heart and soul of Gawler Central, Molyneux remains a key member of the Tigers line-up heading into the 2023 season.

A former Schluter Medallist, Molyneux continues to show his class in the Gawler Central line-up and will play a pivotal role in developing the club's next generation of talent.

"It is an exciting time for the club with the young talent we have coming through," Molyneux told the club's Facebook.

As skipper in 2022, Molyneux provided great leadership for the young group and will be looking to build on that in 2023, while also being a key member on field alongside the Tigers new recruits.



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## THE BOMBERS



### COACH »

Jason Mackenzie

### MOST RECENT

PREMIERSHIP » 2005

### HOME GROUND »

Dutton Park

### SEASON FIXTURE

<b>Round 1</b>	April 22
v Freeling (ANZAC Round)	
<b>Round 2</b>	April 29
at Willaston	
<b>Round 3</b>	May 6
v Barossa District	
<b>Round 4</b>	May 13
at Gawler Central	
<b>Round 5</b>	May 20
v Tanunda	
<b>Round 6</b>	May 27
at South Gawler	
<b>Round 7</b>	Jun 3
BYE	
<b>Long weekend</b>	June 10
BYE	
<b>Round 8</b>	Jun 17
at Angaston	
<b>Round 9</b>	June 24
v Nuriootpa	
<b>Round 10</b>	July 1
at Barossa District	
<b>Zone Champs</b>	July 8-9
(held in Barossa)	
<b>Round 11</b>	July 15
at Freeling	
<b>Round 12</b>	July 22
v Willaston	
<b>Round 13</b>	July 29
v Gawler Central	
<b>Round 14</b>	Aug 5
at Tanunda	
<b>Round 15</b>	Aug 12
v South Gawler	
<b>Round 16</b>	Aug 19
BYE	
<b>Round 17</b>	Aug 26
v Angaston	
<b>Round 18</b>	Sep 2
at Nuriootpa	

Our pick...  
**6th**

# Bombers ready to fly up in 2023

AFTER narrowly missing finals and sitting just a game outside the top four, Kapunda is hoping a solid pre-season can help take it into the finals in 2023.

Under second-year coach Jason McKenzie, the Bombers look set to be one of the teams pushing for a finals spot in a congested middle part of the ladder.

"We have had a solid pre-season and had more numbers on the track than last year which is pleasing," he said.

"That is in part due to the influx of senior colts coming through the group which will hold us in a good spot coming into the season."

"We have learnt a few things about our squad so far and we certainly implemented some things that we have been able to train."

Kapunda has been able to land a recruiting coup, signing former Norwood player Joel Aish from Blackwood for the 2023 season.

While Aish had ankle surgery last year, he will help add experience to a young Kapunda outfit alongside fellow recruit Mitch Parr.

"Joel is looking good, he had ankle surgery last year so he didn't get going until mid-February," he said.

"He is a good addition to the squad and adds experience which helps our young squad along with Mitch Parr, it has added experience and leadership."

The experienced pair will prove valuable around Kapunda's core of young players who have gained senior experience over the past few season.

"Guys like Liam Opitz and Harry Wuttke have played around that 40 game mark and will get better and the thing is all these young lads love footy and trying to get better," he said.

"Riley Menzel is another one entering his first year out of the under 17s and he will have an impact for us this year too."

As for ambitions for the season, McKenzie acknowledged how close the competition was but said he was confident his side would be able to compete and challenge with the rest of the teams in the

hunt for finals action.

"The aim take the leap and play finals," he said.

"It's going to be pretty tight through the middle part and early wins will be important this year."

"We have been together as

a squad and coaching group for two seasons now and we want to build on the finish to last year as our second half was reasonably solid."

"Hopefully we can build from that and win enough games to play finals."



Kapunda's Kallum Brown.

## KEY FIXTURES

### ROUND 3 vs Barossa District

After narrowly missing the finals last season, Kapunda will get an early chance to test its finals credentials against last year's fourth place finisher Barossa District.

The two sides played two close matches last year with the Bulldogs prevailing by 11 points in round one, while Kapunda turned the tables with a three point win in round 11.

With just one win separating the two sides on the ladder last year, the round three clash will be a great chance for the Bombers to get an early season win over a fellow finals contender.

Playing the game at Dutton Park, a win could give Kapunda great momentum as they push towards a finals birth in 2023.

### ROUND 18 at Nuriootpa

It is not often a round 18 fixture can draw much fanfare, but Kapunda's final round clash with reigning premier Nuriootpa could be a season-defining clash.

With the season shaping up as one of the closest in recent memory, the final round clash on Nuri's home deck could prove pivotal for the Bombers finals aspirations.

Nuriootpa won both clashes against Kapunda last year, by 27 points in round two and 68 points in round 12, and the Bombers will be looking to improve on that in 2023.

A round 18 win could help shape the final four and be just the thing for Kapunda heading into a potential finals campaign at the seasons end.



Kapunda's Ari Rigney.



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"THE BUNYIP" GAWLER, On The Ball, 2023 Page 13



#### COACH »

Kyle Jenner

#### MOST RECENT

PREMIERSHIP » 2022

#### HOME GROUND »

Centennial Park Oval

#### SEASON FIXTURE

<b>Round 1</b>	April 25
v Angaston (ANZAC Round)	
<b>Round 2</b>	April 29
at Freeling	
<b>Round 3</b>	May 6
v Willaston	
<b>Round 4</b>	May 13
at Nuriootpa	
<b>Round 5</b>	May 20
v Gawler Central	
<b>Round 6</b>	May 27
at Tanunda	
<b>Round 7</b>	Jun 3
v South Gawler	
<b>Long weekend</b>	June 10
BYE	
<b>Round 8</b>	Jun 17
BYE	
<b>Round 9</b>	June 24
at Kapunda	
<b>Round 10</b>	July 1
at Willaston	
<b>Zone Champs</b>	July 8-9
(held in Barossa)	
<b>Round 11</b>	July 15
at Angaston	
<b>Round 12</b>	July 22
v Freeling	
<b>Round 13</b>	July 29
v Barossa District	
<b>Round 14</b>	Aug 5
at Gawler Central	
<b>Round 15</b>	Aug 12
v Tanunda	
<b>Round 16</b>	Aug 19
at South Gawler	
<b>Round 17</b>	Aug 26
BYE	
<b>Round 18</b>	Sep 2
v Kapunda	



# Nuri primed for shot at back-to-back flags

IT has been an off-season of stability for Nuriootpa, who will be looking to be the first team to record back-to-back premierships in the Barossa, Light & Gawler Football Association since 2016/17.

Nuri upset favourites South Gawler in last year's grand final and will return most of their premiership side, while co-captain Jackson Balwyn will return from an ACL in the early part of the season.

For Nuri coach Kyle Jenner, the stability and depth within his playing group is a key part as to why he thinks his side can be

back in the premiership race in 2023.

"Our biggest strength is we are a cohesive bunch and we don't rely on one or two players to get it done for us," Jenner said.

"We only rely on a group of 15 or 16 guys and this year will be no different, when guys go out of the side for a range of different reasons we have a big squad and great depth which help us get where we want to be."

"We have a number of guys who at any time could be our best player and we think that has us in a really

good spot."

Nuriootpa has been able to develop its own home grown talent and Jenner said it was a testament to the work the club has done over the past few seasons.

"I walked into the club at a really good time," Jenner said.

"We have a group of players who played in under 15 and 17 grand finals together and they are all around 21/22 years of age now and it's a really good platform to build on."

While established names like James and Scott Bentley, Brad Hoepner and Mitch Norton all return for Nuri, Jenner also has hopes that a young gun can make his mark with the squad.

"Nick Gregurke who came off a broken league last year is one to watch," he said.

"Despite the injury, he came fourth or fifth in our best and fairest and he showed in the finals series that he is a real quality player."

Into his third year as player-coach with Nuri, Jenner has enjoyed the challenge of coaching and was also enjoying the role of teaching younger players, bringing his profession to the football field.

"I've enjoyed the coaching side, it's something I wanted to get into after footy and as a playing coach it is particularly challenging," he said.

"You don't get to see everything but now that games are recorded it does give me a chance to watch them all and pick up throughout the week things I may have missed."

"I am a school teacher as well and teaching people how to play footy is something I really enjoy doing and coaching is just the next phase of that progression for me."

As for his side's hopes in 2023, Jenner said that he once again anticipated his side would be challenging for the flag.

"Our aim has always is to be in the finals and to push for a top two spot but you can never bank on anything," he said.

"Things can change pretty quickly with injuries and the like and I am really confident in the group and be around the mark again."



Tiger's Nic Gregurke.

## KEY PLAYERS

### BRAD HOEPNER

A two-time Hurn Family Medallist for best on ground in a grand final, Brad Hoepner has continually produced on the big stage for Nuriootpa.

The talented midfielder split his time between Nuri and work commitments last year and will do the same in 2023, but will be a key part of their midfield this season.

"He was massive in the finals for us last year and he is a proven big game player," coach Kyle Jenner said.

With Hoepner up and firing through Nuri's midfield in 2023, they may prove hard to beat as premiership contenders.

### MITCH NORTON

An unsung hero of Nuri's premiership, Norton quickly became one of the best centre half backs in the BL&G competition.

He was named centre half back in the team of the year, claimed Nuri's best and fairest and produced an inspired performance on grand final day against a potent South forward line.

"He made a massive improvement from the year before and he got himself really fit," Jenner said.

"He was massive for us last year and he became the best centre half back in the comp and we hope he can continue in 2023."



Nuriootpa's Brad Hoepner.

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#### COACH »

Gavin Chaplin

#### MOST RECENT PREMIERSHIP » 2021

**HOME GROUND »**  
Eldred Riggs Reserve

#### SEASON FIXTURE

<b>Round 1</b>	April 2
v Willaston (ANZAC Round)	
<b>Round 2</b>	April 29
at Barossa District	
<b>Round 3</b>	May 6
v Gawler Central	
<b>Round 4</b>	May 13
at Tanunda	
<b>Round 5</b>	May 20
BYE	
<b>Round 6</b>	May 27
v Kapunda	
<b>Round 7</b>	Jun 3
at Nuriootpa	
<b>Long weekend</b>	June 10
BYE	
<b>Round 8</b>	Jun 17
at Freeling	
<b>Round 9</b>	June 24
v Angaston	
<b>Round 10</b>	July 1
at Gawler Central	
<b>Zone Champs</b>	July 8-9
(held in Barossa)	
<b>Round 11</b>	July 15
at Willaston	
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<b>Round 13</b>	July 29
v Tanunda	
<b>Round 14</b>	Aug 5
BYE	
<b>Round 15</b>	Aug 12
at Kapunda	
<b>Round 16</b>	Aug 19
v Nuriootpa	
<b>Round 17</b>	Aug 26
v Freeling	
<b>Round 18</b>	Sep 2
at Angaston	



# Lions on the hunt for redemption in 2023

SOUTH Gawler will look to bounce back from its shock grand final defeat to Nuriootpa last season with the Lions once again set to challenge for the flag in 2023.

The Lions have been the measuring stick in the Barossa, Light & Gawler Football Association over the past three seasons, boasting a 34-3 win loss record over the home and away season.

South have also played in the past three grand finals claiming the flag in 2021, but coach Gavin Chaplin says the Lions will have a slightly different

look in 2023.

Jackson Dare has retired, Brad Bain is unavailable due to work commitments, Hannes Smit has moved to the Hills league while Henry Bennison will suit up for Central District.

"We have had a lot of change on our list from last year, we have had some older guys retire and we have had a couple of guys move on to play elsewhere or with work as well," Chaplin said.

"We have had a couple of former juniors come back and we have some juniors who have come through into the

seniors and we built great depth the past few years."

"We know that depth will help us and we still think we can be pretty competitive."

While the pain of last year's grand final remains, Chaplin said his side was able to take valuable learnings out of the defeat and will be able to build upon it.

"Last year, we were the best side during, but not when it counted on grand final day," he said.

"We learnt that it happens in grand finals and we have just got to rebound and get better as a footy club.

"What happens in the past has happened and we now just move on and focus on what we can control."

South Gawler have been one of the fittest teams in the competition over the past

three seasons, constantly pulling away from sides in the second half of matches.

Chaplin said that the club would continue to make that a strength for the group aided by the late start to season 2023.

"We think we are the fittest side in the competition and we will continue to work in that area," Chaplin said.

"It has been a longer pre-season with the start and that has been good for the group and we are looking pretty good and we are very much looking forward to round one."

With new faces and returning juniors set to give the club a boost, Chaplin said the club was not putting a limit on what it could achieve this season, despite some turnover in key personnel.

"I have been here for three years now and we have been able to create strong culture and build on the great history our footy club has," he said.

"In my time, not everything has been about flags though and our aim is to be competitive, push for the top four and give ourselves a really good chance come the end of the season."



South Gawler's Josh Wittwer.

## KEY PLAYERS

### DARCY JUDD-SMITH

Arguably, no player has been more reliable in defence across the Barossa, Light & Gawler Football Association than Darcy Judd-Smith over the past few seasons.

Judd-Smith has made back-to-back BL&G Team of the Years at the full-back position and has been a key part of a Lions side to play in the last three grand finals.

With some personnel changes at South Gawler, the experienced defender will play an important role in helping the Lions remain firmly in the premiership hunt.

### FLYNN PISANI

Pisani emerged in 2022 as a standout in the Lions midfield making the BL&G Team of the Year amid a breakout year.

While there may be some change through South Gawler's midfield, Pisani shapes a key player as they push toward premiership success.

Joining last year's Schluter Medallist Steve Burton, the pair will play a key part indicating South Gawler's premiership chances this season by supplying their high-scoring forward line.

If South is to remain a viable premiership threat, Pisani will be required to step up and help ease the burden on the new crop of young players suiting up for the Lions.



South Gawler's Patrick White.

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## COACH »

Sam Colquhoun

## MOST RECENT PREMIERSHIP » 2011

## HOME GROUND »

Tanunda Oval

## SEASON FIXTURE

<b>Round 1</b>	April 22
v Barossa District (ANZAC Round)	
<b>Round 2</b>	April 29
at Gawler Central	
<b>Round 3</b>	May 6
BYE	
<b>Round 4</b>	May 13
v South Gawler	
<b>Round 5</b>	May 20
at Kapunda	
<b>Round 6</b>	May 27
v Nuriootpa	
<b>Round 7</b>	Jun 3
at Angaston	
<b>Long weekend</b>	June 10
BYE	
<b>Round 8</b>	Jun 17
at Willaston	
<b>Round 9</b>	June 24
v Freeling	
<b>Round 10</b>	July 1
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<b>Zone Champs</b>	July 8-9
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<b>Round 11</b>	July 15
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<b>Round 13</b>	July 29
at South Gawler	
<b>Round 14</b>	Aug 5
v Kapunda	
<b>Round 15</b>	Aug 12
at Nuriootpa	
<b>Round 16</b>	Aug 19
v Angaston	
<b>Round 17</b>	Aug 26
v Willaston	
<b>Round 18</b>	Sep 2
at Tanunda	

Our pick...  
**3rd**



Tanunda's Hugh Smart.

## Youth looms large for Magpies finals ambitions

AFTER narrowly missing a place in the grand final last season, Tanunda is looking to take the next step as they hunt their first premiership since 2011.

While SANFL veteran Zane Kirkwood has moved on, Magpies coach Sam Colquhoun was optimistic about his team's chances this season with the club's youngsters set to spur their improvement.

"Over the last couple of years, whilst we haven't had premiership success we have been able to get games into our young local guys who we think can make a real difference this year," Colquhoun said.

"Guys like Bailey Smith who is our co-captain this year, Brett Dowse, Hugh Smart, these are all local guys who are all getting into that 40/50 senior game bracket and I think they are all ready to take a big step up."

As well as their promising young players, Tanunda has also been able to secure former

Sturt SANFL player Rune Gilfoy with the key defender to help bolster the Magpies back six.

The stability in the playing group has been a big tick for the club and Colquhoun said it had led to a positive vibe within the football club.

"It has been a reasonably good pre-season and we haven't really had massive changes which is good for our development as a club," he said.

"We will get a lot of improvement internally and the guys we have are getting into the right age bracket and we hope they can help us take the next step."

As for his own development as a coach, Colquhoun was enjoying the challenge of being a player-coach and said he has learnt a lot since he stepped into the role.

"I am probably at the stage where I have built relationships rather than just coaching on

face value," he said.

"I don't pretend to be a coaching guru, I just try to be as organised as possible and remain consistent with the messaging and be clear in what we are trying to achieve."

As for the 2023 season, Colquhoun was hoping his side was able to take the leap with the continual improvement of its young core of players.

"I like to think we will be around the mark, Nuri and South are the bench mark and we will do our best to compete with them," he said.

"For us as a club, our issue has been our depth in the last couple of years and we have shown in patches we can match it with anyone."

"Our strength across the board isn't quite there with those top teams but if we can continue to improve and give ourselves a chance who knows what can happen."

## KEY PLAYERS

### ROUND 1 vs Barossa District

A rematch of last elimination final, both sides will be out to get their seasons off to the best possible start with a victory in round one.

The round one fixture will also take on extra significance with the match to be Tanunda's first since the tragic passing of club stalwart and former president Danny Westhoff.

It is set to be an emotional-fuelled occasion with Tanunda looking to honour the club great with a win and get their season underway with a victory. It will also be a big day for the whole club with the club's women's team set to open their season against the Bulldogs under lights after the A-grade clash.

### ROUNDS 4/6 vs South Gawler and Nuriootpa

A pair of season-defining home games in quick succession for Sam Colquhoun's men against both of last year's grand final sides.

The Magpies were 0-3 across the home and away and finals series against Nuri and turning that around may lead Tanunda towards a double chance in the 2023 season.

Getting a chance at early wins against fellow premiership contenders on their home deck, it gives Tanunda a chance to gain an early advantage on their rivals.

The round four clash with South also looms large with the Magpies having not beaten the Lions since the 2019 season and a win over the competition benchmark for the past three years may help shape their season.



Tanunda's Tod Falkenburg.



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#### COACH »

Damien Herzick

#### MOST RECENT

**PREMIERSHIP » 1999**

#### HOME GROUND »

Elliot Goodger Reserve

#### SEASON FIXTURE

<b>Round 1</b>	April 22
at South Gawler (ANZAC Round)	
<b>Round 2</b>	April 29
v Kapunda	
<b>Round 3</b>	May 6
at Nuriootpa	
<b>Round 4</b>	May 13
v Angaston	
<b>Round 5</b>	May 20
at Freeling	
<b>Round 6</b>	May 27
BYE	
<b>Round 7</b>	Jun 3
v Barossa District	
<b>Long weekend</b>	June 10
BYE	
<b>Round 8</b>	Jun 17
v Tanunda	
<b>Round 9</b>	June 24
at Gawler Central	
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at Willaston	
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at Angaston	
<b>Round 14</b>	Aug 5
v Freeling	
<b>Round 15</b>	Aug 12
BYE	
<b>Round 16</b>	Aug 19
at Barossa District	
<b>Round 17</b>	Aug 26
at Tanunda	
<b>Round 18</b>	Sep 2
v Gawler Central	



Willaston's Dillon Vitnell.

# New coach, new players, new era at Willaston

LESS than two seasons removed from a grand final appearance, Willaston is set to embark on a new era with new coach Damien Herzick to take the reins.

Herzick is no stranger to the Barossa, Light & Gawler Football Association having previously coached a premiership at Gawler Central.

Herzick has also coached South Gawler and Virginia in the Adelaide Plains Football League and his most recent coaching opportunity was a stint as forwards coach at North Adelaide.

The experienced coach takes over a talented group, who despite faltering in the second half of the season finished only two wins outside the final places.

The Donnybrooks have been able to add experienced players into their squad, bringing over Donald Wills and Joel Holloway into the club for the upcoming season.

The pair have also been joined by former Willaston players Nick Lehman and Brayden Combs, who have returned after stints away with other clubs.

The quartet will fit in well with Tyson Irlam, who was a standout for Willaston in making the BL&G team of the year after booting 18 goals in 15 matches.

While the club has been able to retain its talents, it has lost Oliver Petrohilos who has followed former coach Andrew Jarman to Port Noarlunga.

Willaston looms as one of many sides who look set to compete

for a spot in the top four, but a difficult first month will give the Donnybrooks a fair idea of where it sits in the competition. The Donnys are away in round one to competition measuring stick South Gawler before returning home to take on an improving Kapunda in round two.

Willaston hits the road again in round three to take on reigning premier Nuriootpa at Centennial Park Oval before another home clash with fellow final contender Angaston.

If the Donnys can escape the first month of the season with a 2-2 or 3-1 record, it will give itself an excellent chance at finals football, but a slip-up especially at home could cause trouble for their finals chances.

## KEY FIXTURES

### ROUND 1 at South Gawler

A tough test awaits new Willaston coach Damien Herzick in round one, with the Donnys heading down the road to take on South Gawler.

A rematch of the famous 2021 grand final, the season opener will shape as a great test for Willaston to see where it sits among the competition pace setters. Willaston handed South Gawler their only loss of the home and away season last year and if the Donnys can push the Lions or perhaps cause an upset, it may set Willaston up for a crack at finals and more heading into season 2023.

### ROUND 4 vs Angaston

A clash between two sides looking to break into the finals in 2023, the match between Willaston and Angaston looks set to be an important game for both teams.

The two sides played two extremely different games last year, with Willaston toppling Angaston in round six by 86 points before the Panthers dominated the round 15 clash claiming a 73-point win. Played at Elliot Goodger Reserve, Willaston will look to make a statement on their home deck and an early win could prove critical in helping Willaston build early momentum and move toward a finals berth.



Willaston's Ashley Fry.

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# BAROSSA, LIGHT & GAWLER FOOTBALL WOMEN'S FIXTURE

## ROUND 1 *Apr 22/23*

Tanunda v Barossa District  
South Gawler v Willaston  
Nuriootpa v Light

**BYE:** Gawler Central

**ANZAC  
ROUND**

## ROUND 8 *Jun 17/18*

Tanunda v Willaston  
Light v South Gawler  
Barossa v Gawler Central

**BYE:** Nuriootpa

## SEMI FINAL

*August 13 - Barossa District*

## PRELIMINARY FINAL

*August 20 - Willaston*

## ROUND 2 *Apr 29/30*

Gawler Central v Tanunda  
Barossa District v South Gawler  
Willaston v Light

**BYE:** Nuriootpa

## ROUND 9 *Jun 24/25*

Gawler Central v Willaston  
Nuriootpa v South Gawler  
Light v Tanunda

**BYE:** Barossa District

## GRAND FINAL

*August 27 - South Gawler*

## ROUND 3 *May 7*

South Gawler v Gawler Central  
Light v Barossa District  
Nuriootpa v Willaston

**BYE:** Tanunda

## ROUND 10 *Jul 2*

South Gawler v Gawler Central  
Willaston v Nuriootpa  
Barossa District v Light

**BYE:** Tanunda

## ROUND 4 *May 13/14*

Tanunda v South Gawler  
Barossa District v Nuriootpa  
Willaston v Gawler Central

**BYE:** Light

## ROUND 11 *Jul 15/16*

South Gawler v Willaston  
Nuriootpa v Light  
Tanunda v Barossa

**BYE:** Gawler Central

## ROUND 5 *May 20/21*

Light v South Gawler  
Gawler Central v Nuriootpa  
Willaston v Tanunda

**BYE:** Barossa District

## ROUND 12 *Jul 23*

Gawler Central v Nuriootpa  
Barossa District v Willaston  
Tanunda v South Gawler

**BYE:** Light

## ROUND 6 *May 28*

South Gawler v Nuriootpa  
Barossa District v Gawler Central  
Light v Tanunda

**BYE:** Willaston

## ROUND 13 *Jul 29/30*

Light v Gawler Central  
South Gawler v Barossa District  
Nuriootpa v Tanunda

**BYE:** Willaston

## ROUND 7 *Jun 3/4*

Willaston v Barossa District  
Tanunda v Nuriootpa  
Gawler Central v Light

**BYE:** South Gawler

## ROUND 14 *Aug 6*

Willaston v Light  
Nuriootpa v Barossa District



## Who will challenge dominant Donnybrooks?

AFTER Willaston completed an undefeated premiership season in 2022, the challenge awaits for the rest of the Barossa, Light & Gawler women's competition as to who can take down the Donnybrooks.

Willaston has been a powerhouse of the women's competition playing in the last four grand finals and claiming two premierships in that period of time. The Donnys look set to remain the team to beat under coach Megan Boers-Veen.

The BL&GW will take a new-look in 2023, with Nuriootpa returning to the competition for the upcoming season. However Angaston will not take part.

The Panthers will remain in the junior competitions with strong numbers set to develop the next generation of Angaston women's players.

Could upstart Nuri pull a surprise in their return to the competition? Or will established contenders like Barossa District and Light take the crown from Willaston?

As the BL&GW competition continues to develop, the skill

and talent on show continues to get better and better, with a large number of girls progressing to the SANFLW level this season.

Stars such as Gawler Central's Shelby Smith and Willaston's Caitlin Wendland have proven their credentials at SANFLW level after coming through the BL&GW competition.

These girls have paved the way for the next generation with stars like Sophie Eaton and Holly Tralagan progressing into South Australian underage state teams.

The BL&GW will also celebrate several feature rounds in 2023, with Indigenous Round, Pink Ribbon Round for Breast Cancer Awareness and a Pride Round to be highlights on the fixture. Saturday night games also loom as marquee occasions for the women to showcase their talents.

This season shapes as another big step forward for the competition, with an improving season set to become one of the best leagues in the state, with teams hungry to topple the dominant Willaston outfit.

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## HOME GROUND »

Williamstown Oval/ Lyndoch Oval

## SEASON FIXTURE

<b>Round 1</b>	April 22/23 at Tanunda (ANZAC Round)
<b>Round 2</b>	April 29/30 v South Gawler
<b>Round 3</b>	May 7 at Light
<b>Round 4</b>	May 13/14 v Nuriootpa
<b>Round 5</b>	May 20/21 BYE
<b>Round 6</b>	May 28 v Gawler Central
<b>Round 7</b>	Jun 3/4 at Willaston
<b>Long weekend</b>	June 10 BYE
<b>Round 8</b>	Jun 17/18 v Gawler Central
<b>Round 9</b>	June 24/25 BYE
<b>Round 10</b>	July 2 v Light
<b>Round 11</b>	July 15/16 at Tanunda
<b>Round 12</b>	July 23 v Willaston
<b>Round 13</b>	July 29/30 at South Gawler
<b>Round 14</b>	Aug 6 at Nuriootpa



# Bulldogs boosted in finals quest

BAROSSA District is once again set to be a contender for the 2023 BL&GW season, after a strong off-season and the addition of some new recruits.

After falling in last year's preliminary final, the Bulldogs have been putting in the hard yards during the pre-season in anticipation for their round one clash under lights against Tanunda.

Barossa has been the beneficiary of Angaston being unable to field a side this season, with a pair of talented young players to adding depth to the Bulldogs squad.

Speedsters Hayley Henke and Peyton Hartung have joined the Bulldogs and will help their new side contend with Willaston and Light for premiership glory.

While question marks remain of the potential availability of star SANFLW defensive duo Madison Lane and Georgia Madigan, a deep list of close to 30 girls has Barossa firmly in finals contention.

The Bulldogs are littered with young talent across all three lines including names such as Ellie Ward, Teagan Robins and Tiarna Groverman, who give Barossa plenty of options through midfield.

Barossa also possess one of the league's most potent forward lines with Amalee Struck and Emily Godin helping the Bulldogs to the league's second highest scoring offence.

The Bulldogs will once again be in finals contention with their young core continuing to develop across the season. It will keep them in touch with the top of the table before the potential return of their SANFLW stars.



Barossa District's Kiarra Print.



Barossa District's Karissa Searle.



**GAWLER CENTRAL**  
EST 1889

**COACH »**

Jason Gibson

**HOME GROUND »**

Gawler Oval

**SEASON FIXTURE**

<b>Round 1</b>	April 22/23
BYE (ANZAC Round)	
<b>Round 2</b>	April 29/30
v Tanunda	
<b>Round 3</b>	May 7
at South Gawler	
<b>Round 4</b>	May 13/14
at Willaston	
<b>Round 5</b>	May 20/21
v Nuriootpa	
<b>Round 6</b>	May 28
at Barossa District	
<b>Round 7</b>	Jun 3/4
v Light	
<b>Long weekend</b>	June 10
BYE	
<b>Round 8</b>	Jun 17/18
at Barossa District	
<b>Round 9</b>	June 24/25
v Willaston	
<b>Round 10</b>	July 2
at South Gawler	
<b>Round 11</b>	July 15/16
BYE	
<b>Round 12</b>	July 23
v Nuriootpa	
<b>Round 13</b>	July 29/30
at Light	
<b>Round 14</b>	Aug 6
BYE	



# Tigers looking to take next steps



GAWLER Central will enter the 2023 season full of confidence as it looks to improve on last season.

The Tigers finished fourth but fell narrowly to Light by just nine points in the elimination final, with the close result giving the group confidence ahead of the 2023 season.

Gawler Central will have a new coach for the upcoming season with Jason Gibson taking over the reins from Matt Knight, who has moved his focus to his work with Woodville West Torrens.

Gibson takes over a talented playing group filled with young talented looking to take the next steps in their football careers.

Headlined by Shannon Murphy and Demi Sonneman, the pair are just some of the top level talent that the Tigers have produced.

While Central District SANFLW skipper Shelby Smith and rising star Laitiah Huynh are unlikely to take part in much football for the Tigers this season, the talent is still there for Central to taste success.

The Tigers have a bye in round one before winnable games against Tanunda and South Gawler in rounds two and three.

Victory in those early season clashes will give Gawler Central plenty of belief and with a young talented group and momentum on its side, who knows what this talented group could achieve this season.



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#### COACH »

Ben Schomann

#### HOME GROUND »

Emmetts Park/Dutton Park

#### SEASON FIXTURE

<b>Round 1</b>	April 22/23
at Nuriootpa (ANZAC Round)	
<b>Round 2</b>	April 29/30
at Willaston	
<b>Round 3</b>	May 7
v Barossa District	
<b>Round 4</b>	May 13/14
BYE	
<b>Round 5</b>	May 20/21
v South Gawler	
<b>Round 6</b>	May 28
v Tanunda	
<b>Round 7</b>	Jun 3/4
at Gawler Central	
<b>Long weekend</b>	June 10
BYE	
<b>Round 8</b>	Jun 17/18
v South Gawler	
<b>Round 9</b>	June 24/25
v Tanunda	
<b>Round 10</b>	July 2
at Barossa District	
<b>Round 11</b>	July 15/16
at Nuriootpa	
<b>Round 12</b>	July 23
BYE	
<b>Round 13</b>	July 29/30
v Gawler Central	
<b>Round 14</b>	Aug 6
at Willaston	



# Light looking to go one better

AFTER a successful first season, the Light women's football team returns in 2023, with the club expanding the move to its junior teams.

The joint venture between Freeling and Kapunda was met with a warm reception from both clubs, and senior coach Ben Schomann said this year was about solidifying the partnership.

"Pre-season has been good and we have had good numbers out on the track," he said.

"This year is all about consolidating what we have done by joining the two clubs together and making the Light football club its own brand and solidifying what we have done with the two clubs."

Schomann said that both club's being supportive of the move had made the inaugural season a success, with the Wheaties falling to dominant favourite Willaston in the grand final.

"Both clubs have been really supportive of it and backing the girls to make it work which has been a real positive for the women's footy program," he said.

"The toughest thing is to find the right mix between what you do and where you do it and to make sure both clubs are included, but right now it's been a success for both clubs."

Light had a talented core of young players, headlined by South Australian under 18 representative Sophie Eaton, and Schomann said that the club was hoping to continue to develop its young talent, as has been evident right across the League.

"The League is doing a fantastic job of promoting itself and it is fantastic to see the younger girls come through junior grades and push into senior grades," he said.

"We have a good core group of girls who will be around from last year and who will come up from the under 16s which was a really successful team, which is great for the group."

With a young and talented group of girls, Schomann said that a fast style of play would be a hallmark of what Light produces on-field.

"First and foremost, it is about building the skill set and



Light's Ella Leggett.

we are working heavily on our fundamentals – kicking, catching and handballing and controlling the ball," he said. "If we can control the ball, we can control the game and with our youth we want to move the ball quickly as well."

Schomann was optimistic about his side's chances, but

was unsure if they could catch Willaston after their dominant year.

"We are expecting to be competitive," he said.

"Will we bridge the gap to Willaston, that's the big unknown but we expect to be around the mark and hopefully make the finals again."



#### COACH »

Shaun Ribbons

#### HOME GROUND »

Centennial Park Oval

#### SEASON FIXTURE

<b>Round 1</b>	April 22/23
v Light (ANZAC Round)	
<b>Round 2</b>	April 29/30
BYE	
<b>Round 3</b>	May 7
v Willaston	
<b>Round 4</b>	May 13/14
at Barossa District	
<b>Round 5</b>	May 20/21
at Gawler Central	
<b>Round 6</b>	May 28
at South Gawler	
<b>Round 7</b>	Jun 3/4
at Tanunda	
<b>Long weekend</b>	June 10
BYE	
<b>Round 8</b>	Jun 17/18
BYE	
<b>Round 9</b>	June 24/25
v South Gawler	
<b>Round 10</b>	July 2
at Willaston	
<b>Round 11</b>	July 15/16
v Light	
<b>Round 12</b>	July 23
at Gawler Central	
<b>Round 13</b>	July 29/30
v Tanunda	
<b>Round 14</b>	Aug 6
v Barossa District	



# New beginnings for Nuriootpa

RETURNING to the competition for the first time since 2019, Nuriootpa is ready to crack into the 2023 BL&GW season with an eager group of girls ready to make their mark in the yellow and black.

For coach Shaun Ribbons, starting from the ground up is nothing new, having been the inaugural coach for Centrals SANFLW team.

"I learnt a few things from doing that and it was great to learn there," he said.

"I think there was only four girls at the first come-and-try but their energy and spark inspired us and we just got to work and reached out to as many people as possible to make this work."

"Slowly but surely we found assistants, trainers and others to be on the journey and we are pretty excited to see where it has got too from nothing at all."

Ribbons said the challenge had been building a squad, as it was for most new clubs, but the reception and positivity has allowed the team to grow and take their place.

"Mostly for us, it has just been finding the numbers to get started and now we have been able to get to that place," he said.

"We now have enough for an under 10s, an under 13s and a seniors team to see all the new faces in the last couple of weeks has been great and to see the energy with a team together, it is fantastic."

While the number, were hard to come by initially, Ribbons was buoyed by the strong contingent of eight to 10 girls who were training every week and said some were ready to impress this season.

"Renee Richardson has played league footy for Centrals and North so she will be fantastic for us," he said.

"Harley Gerlach is the daughter of a life member, she has come back from Kapunda to help us out and a couple of Angaston girls who came across after they couldn't get a team up and have put in the work for us."

As Nuri was just starting out, Ribbons had tempered

expectations for the group but was excited by the challenge of what was to come.

"Our goal for the year is really just to get a team on the park week to week and to be competitive," he said.

"Everybody who takes the field wants to be competitive and it's motivation for the girls while having fun and developing something special from the ground up."



Nuriootpa coach, Shaun Ribbons.

This season, one Ground Marshal in a yellow fluorescent vest from each participating BL&G club will be in attendance at all games.

They are present to assist spectators and participants enjoy their match day experience.

If you experience any anti-social behaviour towards umpires, players or other spectators, please seek out YOUR CLUBS Ground Marshal for assistance in safely managing the issue.



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## COACH »

Hannah Pavlovich

## HOME GROUND »

Eldred Riggs Reserve

## SEASON FIXTURE

**Round 1** April 22/23  
v Willaston (ANZAC Round)

**Round 2** April 29/30  
at Barossa District

**Round 3** May 7  
v Gawler Central

**Round 4** May 13/14  
at Tanunda

**Round 5** May 20/21  
at Light

**Round 6** May 28  
v Nuriootpa

**Round 7** Jun 3/4  
BYE

**Long weekend** June 10  
BYE

**Round 8** Jun 17/18  
at Light

**Round 9** June 24/25  
at Nuriootpa

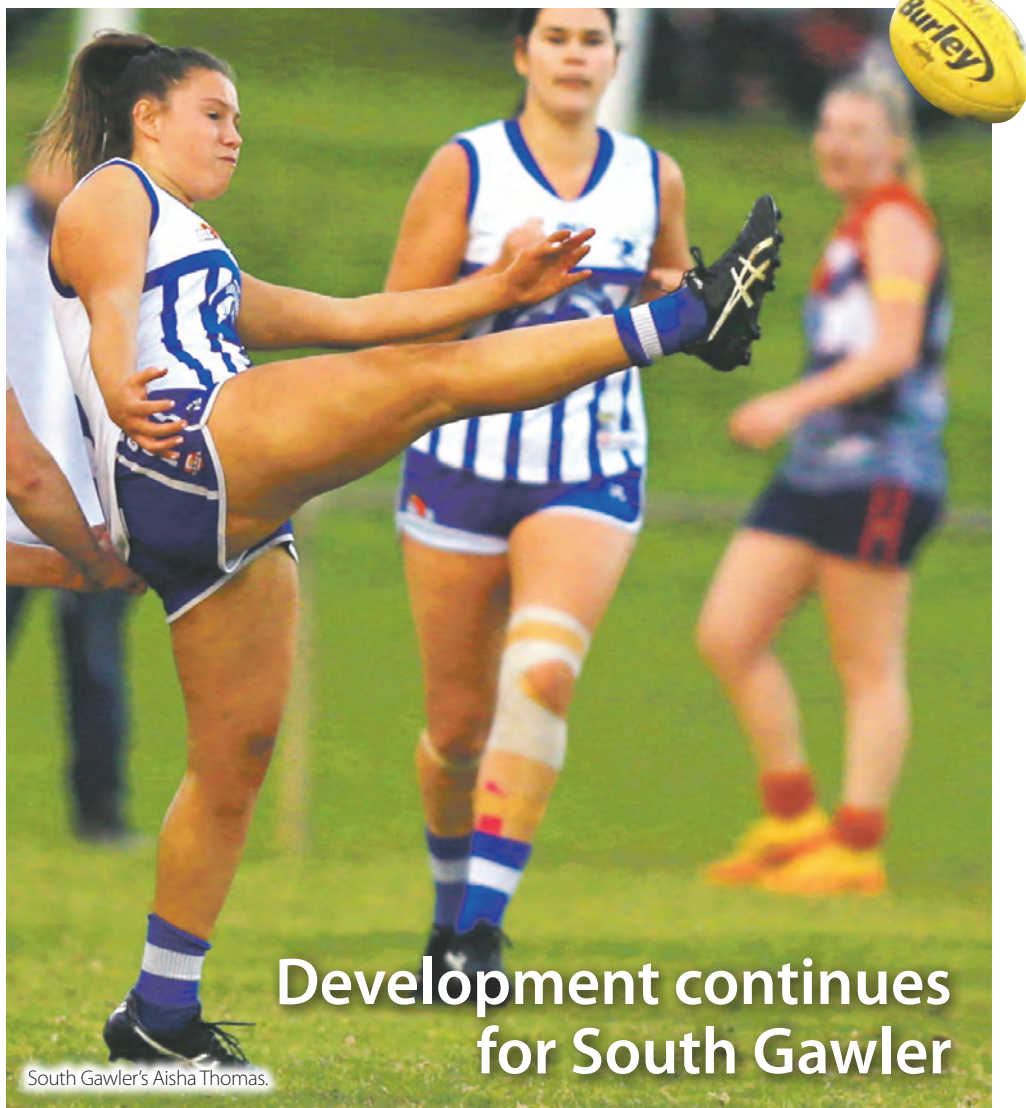
**Round 10** July 2  
v Gawler Central

**Round 11** July 15/16  
v Willaston

**Round 12** July 23  
at Tanunda

**Round 13** July 29/30  
v Barossa District

**Round 14** Aug 6  
BYE



South Gawler's Aisha Thomas.

# Development continues for South Gawler

AFTER showing solid improvement in the back end of last season, South Gawler are set to continue their progress in 2023.

While Aisha Thomas has stepped aside from coaching due to her playing commitments with Central District, her assistant from 2022, Hannah Pavlovich, has stepped into the senior coach role.

"It is a bit of a step up going from being an assistant to coaching," Pavlovich said.

"Juggling it with playing as well can be a bit tricky, but I am looking forward to it."

Only 19 at the start of last season, Thomas was the youngest coach in the BL&GW but Pavlovich said she learnt a lot from her and the famous Thomas football family.

"I had the honour of learning and leading under Aisha last year and she taught me so much," she said.

"She has such a famous footy background and gave me so much knowledge, I have pretty big shoes to step into."

Pavlovich has hit the ground running at South Gawler, with a long pre-season helping build comradery within a squad mixed with new and existing players.

"I am pretty excited and I am ready to take on the leadership for the girls this season," she said.

"We have some new girls coming over from the Northern League so it is great to have some new talent to go with our existing group."

South were one of the big improvers in the second half of last season, winning four games after the club didn't field a women's side in 2021.

Pavlovich hopes that the club can continue to take strides forward and improve in what shapes as a tight 10-team competition.

"We want to improve in areas where we struggled last year and just keep getting better," she said.

"The girls are half old and half new and I want the older girls to lead by example and help the new girls to showcase their potential while also just focusing on the basics and getting them right."

As for the style of footy she wants her team to play, Pavlovich said she wanted to be tough to play against and be a team that other sides do not want to face.

"I want us to concentrate on the tackling pressure and pressure at the footy," she said.

"I want to be that team when you see them on the fixture you know you are going to have a tough day and we will be hard to play against."

"If we can do that, I think we will have a good year."

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**HOME GROUND »**  
Tanunda Oval

## SEASON FIXTURE

<b>Round 1</b>	April 22/23
v Barossa District (ANZAC Round)	
<b>Round 2</b>	April 29/30
at Gawler Central	
<b>Round 3</b>	May 7
BYE	
<b>Round 4</b>	May 13/14
v South Gawler	
<b>Round 5</b>	May 20/21
at Willaston	
<b>Round 6</b>	May 28
at Light	
<b>Round 7</b>	Jun 3/4
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<b>Long weekend</b>	June 10
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v Barossa District	
<b>Round 12</b>	July 23
v South Gawler	
<b>Round 13</b>	July 29/30
at Nuriootpa	
<b>Round 14</b>	Aug 6
BYE	



# Positive steps still the focus for Tanunda



AFTER winning just one game as one of the BL&GW's newest sides, Tanunda is out to continue its development and progress in the 2023 season. While it didn't show in the wins column, the Magpies made positive steps in the 2022 season as it worked on developing its own brand of football.

The Magpies won their final game of the season, beating eventual grand finalist Light to produce its best season to date and it will hope to carry that into 2023.

With 2022 being a development year, including many girls with little to no football experience, the focus for Tanunda will be continuing that development while also working on their skills and fitness base.

Tanunda built its squad around a number of impressive young girls, including Sydney Schild who featured in the Magpies best in four of the six games she played.

Sophie Watson was another young local girl who made strides in 2022 and will look to continue her progress in 2023.

Watson, returned from an injury early last season and was quick to establish herself as one of the Magpies best young talents, finishing with seven best player nods from 12 appearances.

Tanunda is still a developing

side and with clashes against last year's finalists in Barossa District and Gawler Central in the opening two rounds, the Magpies will get an early chance to test themselves

against the best.

If Tanunda can push these sides and continue to develop its young players in 2023, then the Magpies will have a successful season to look forward to.



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#### SEASON FIXTURE

<b>Round 1</b>	April 22/23 at South Gawler (ANZAC Round)
<b>Round 2</b>	April 29/30 v Light
<b>Round 3</b>	May 7 at Nuriootpa
<b>Round 4</b>	May 13/14 v Gawler Central
<b>Round 5</b>	May 20/21 v Tanunda
<b>Round 6</b>	May 28 BYE
<b>Round 7</b>	Jun 3/4 v Barossa District
<b>Long weekend</b>	June 10 BYE
<b>Round 8</b>	Jun 17/18 at Tanunda
<b>Round 9</b>	June 24/25 at Gawler Central
<b>Round 10</b>	July 2 v Nuriootpa
<b>Round 11</b>	July 15/16 at South Gawler
<b>Round 12</b>	July 23 at Barossa
<b>Round 13</b>	July 29/30 BYE
<b>Round 14</b>	Aug 6 v Light



## Willaston hunting back-to-back flags

WILLASTON will look to continue its run of success in the BL&GW competition after claiming the premiership in an undefeated season in 2022.

The Donnybrooks outscored their opponents by more than 300 points last season, while also having the League's best defence by more than 130 points.

While the success firmly has Willaston as the team to beat in 2023, coach Megan Boers-Veen said she wasn't worrying about the competition and was focusing on her own group.

"The thing I do every year is not worry about the other teams," she said.

"I can't worry about what other teams do, I have to focus on the girls in front of me as people first and foremost."

The people-first approach has been a hallmark of Boers-Veen's tenure at Willaston, with the coach capping her premiership success with the award for the SANFL's Community Coach of the Year.

"I have a really player-first focused game plans and structures and just making sure the girls feel strong and confident and happy on the field," she said.

"We can't expect to win every week, but I want to constantly expect the girls to believe that they can win every week."

Willaston has been a footy factory in recent years, with the Donnybrooks pushing a number of players to the SANFLW level including Caitlin Wendland and Dakota Williams.

Boers-Veen said that there a number of girls who could follow in the footsteps of their teammates in the coming years.

"Shania Chenoweth and Lillian Bornholdt, they have been working so hard over summer and they are always out running extra laps after training," she said.

"We have a recruit in Liz Wilson from Canberra who has impressed and then young Ophelia Neumann and Brooke Fry who have also been working really hard at their craft this offseason."



Willaston's Caitlin Wendland.

While expectation is high externally, Boers-Veen is taking a relaxed approach as her team enters the season.

"You are never going to win every week as much as we

would like to," she said.

"It is about keeping the girls relaxed and happy and if we are in a position to compete at the end of the season, then I will be very happy as a coach."



## Netball goes from strength to strength

DESPITE growing interest in women's football, netball remains a staple across the Barossa, Light & Gawler area as the BL&GNA continues to go from strength to strength. Hundreds of girls are set to compete in the Barossa, Light & Gawler Netball Association in this year, with 17 grades across junior and senior level taking to the court.

The high participation level stems from a competitive Senior 1 competition which

saw an all Gawler grand final in 2022 as South Gawler defeated Gawler Central in the decider.

The two sides look set to be two of the main contenders in 2023, especially with long-time premiership threat Barossa District in a rebuilding period.

Of the other challengers, Nuriootpa have been actively recruiting and appear set to take a leap up the ladder, while Kapunda

also has ambitions of a finals finish.

It is shaping up to be one of the most wide-open and even BL&G netball seasons in recent memory and it is a big tick for the important role netball plays.

With a continual high standard of on-court action, new coaches and key recruits, the Barossa, Light & Gawler netball competition looks set to once again steal the show this winter sports season.

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# Panthers ready to pounce

ANGASTON is looking to build upon its third place finish and finals appearance as it enters the 2023 senior one netball season.

It as a positive step forward for the club last year and President Belinda Harris hopes that the momentum can continue.

"We have had really good numbers out there so far in preseason and it is looking good," Harris said.

"We had a good year last year and hopefully we can be a finals contender again this season."

The Panthers made an early start to pre-season in part due to the resurfacing of the club's courts giving Angaston one of the best facilities heading into the New Year.

"The new courts have been absolutely fabulous," she said.

"It makes it so much easier on the girls and they aren't dodging potholes or cracks. It gives us the best up to date facilities, which helps attract players."

Angaston was successful last season and have been able to build by bringing players new and old back into the fold.

"We have a couple of changes with a couple of girls returning from town including Laura Ide and Lilly Miles, while also adding a player from

Jaguars in town as well," Harris said.

"These girls join the squad while retaining others and we have been training nice and hard to push towards finals again."

The club is also continuing to build on its junior program and encouraging those players to take the next step into senior netball in coming years.

"We have Jemima Barrett and Hannah Noack coming up who have been a couple of our standout inters in recent years," she said.

"It is so important for us. It is the future of the club which we are really excited about. It's a great experience for the girls in the squad to build on that and push them further, and build them into good senior netballers."

With a mix of youth and experience, Harris hopes the club will be able to break through and end its long premiership drought.

"It would be very nice," she said.

"With Lou Hadden returning as coach, the girls will get that continuity this season and continue to work on what they need to get more success."

"The players are looking forward to it and we are looking forward to it as a club as well."



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# Changing of the guard for Barossa

A PERENNIAL contender in Senior One netball, 2023 looms as a year of change for Barossa District with several key players moving on from the club.

Despite the change in personnel, Bulldogs president Robyn Crack said the club is optimistic of its finals possibilities in 2023 after narrowly missing a grand final birth last year.

"Our expectations are always to push for a top four finish," Crack said.

"We just need to continue to learn as a group, build a solid foundation in defence and get our combinations in attack feeling comfortable."

After a period of sustained success, there has been numerous changes with Zoe Hoffrichter and Abi Mader moving to Nuriootpa, and Adele Williams and Lisa Emes retiring.

Barossa has been able to retain

key trio Shannon Caire, Tamara Rowe and Stacey Nelson, along with several young players looking to take a step up.

"We have some great inclusions in the team including Nicole Bruce-Gordon, Taylah Willis and Ebony Butler among others," Crack said.

"I'm really excited to see how Zahra Court goes in our league as well."

"She is a young mid court/ defence from Uraidla and she has been working hard in the pre-season and taking everything on board. She is an exciting prospect."

While the changes at the club have been significant, Crack said the positive energy at the club across all levels has been noticeable.

"The overall feel at the club is a good vibe. We have had several sessions with the senior and inter netballers and the senior and colts footballers, and there's

lot of laughs and enjoyment in the group from both codes," she said.

"Our junior numbers have improved significantly and that is a testament to the hard work over summer of several people who worked tirelessly with our juniors."

With more change on the horizon, Crack was pleased to know that the club was well positioned heading into the 2023 season and beyond.

"We are in a rebuilding phase and knowing that this year may be the last with a couple of players means we are looking forward to recruitment and the development of our young players," she said.

"We are looking forward to the challenges ahead, there are some very exciting line ups across all the senior 1 teams in this year's competition and that is very good for the association going forward."



**COACH »** Robyn Crack

**MOST RECENT PREMIERSHIP »** 2018

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# Freeling look to build in 2023 season

HEADING into its second season under coach Sarah Shanahan, Freeling is looking to build on the solid foundations laid on the back of a five-win season last year.

Led by its talented core of young players pushing into senior netball, Shanahan hopes that her young group will be able to continue to improve.

"Our expectation for this year is to build on last year's total of five wins," Shanahan said.

"We want to push the top teams of last year and come away with a few more wins and really push for finals contention."

There has been minimal changes to the Freeling squad, with much of its young group remaining intact with only Anaïs Morris moving on due to work commitments.

The club has been able to attract Haylee Puckeridge, who recently moved into the area.

"We welcome in Haylee who has moved into Freeling and she will strengthen and complement our remaining players and bring a versatility to the team," she said.

Shanahan also highlighted the strong connection many of the players had with the town, saying the connection that the players had with the town was building a strong culture at the club.

"Our club is proud of the fact that most of our players are local players that live in the town, have been loyal Freeling players over many years and many that have grown up in the township," she said.

"We are excited to see a solid foundation beginning last

season, and for this to be further consolidated this year as we've welcomed new players to our club who have moved into our township."

The club has been bolstered by strong participation, with the club fielding teams in every grade this season and building on its depth.

One standout has been Meg Cocks who has impressed the club on her return from having a baby.

"Meg has impressed the selectors, coaches and players as she returns after having a baby last season," she said.

"She will bring our team strength, leadership, height and more versatility and we look forward to having Meg back on the court this year."

As for the club as a whole, Shanahan is relishing the challenge of leading the club and its young players towards success in the near future.

"Freeling has been waiting a long time to have depth of players to build strength and success at the top of our club and we are using the opportunity to set in place a focus on team improvement, development and club unity," she said.

"We worked hard last year to get five wins and the strong bond that the players formed over last season has continued into this season which is fantastic."

"As the Senior 1 coach, I am looking forward to watching this group of players continue to grow as a team and I am excited to see what they can achieve."



Freeling's Amelia Schuster.



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COACH » Sarah Shanahan  
MOST RECENT PREMIERSHIP » 1998



# Tigers on the prowl this season

AFTER narrowly missing premiership success last season, Gawler Central have turned to veteran head coach Scott Waddington as their new Senior One coach for the 2023 netball season.

Returning to coaching after a brief hiatus due to health and personal reasons, Waddington returns for a second stint after coaching the club during a break from city coaching in 2014.

"I spent 15 years coaching in the Premier League but broke that up with a gap year at Gawler Central in 2014 when my wife's parents were ill before going back to Tango," Waddington told *The Bunyip*.

"I have retired from coaching in the city but my daughters played at Gawler Central and my youngest still does. She convinced me to come back into coaching and I really enjoyed it."

Waddington played a key role in the Tigers junior programs in 2022, helping bring a city mentality to a young group and trying to drive elite standards amongst the playing squad.

With more than 30 years experience, a senior coaching berth came calling with Waddington bringing his unique skill-set to a Tigers team who are looking to take the final step towards premiership success.

"Originally the club wanted me to work on building different programs which were building towards making long-term plans and success for the club, that's why I worked with the juniors last year," he said.

"Coming from the city where you never coach just one team, we worked on training the junior girls in the ones and twos in the same squads and we had a lot of success with that."

While most of the Gawler Central senior core would be returning in 2023, Waddington was also hoping to promote some of the youth that he had worked alongside at junior level.

"Coaching the juniors, I could definitely see some potential Senior One and Two players coming through the pathway so

it's about building on that and bringing them into the seniors," he said.

"The talent is definitely there and it's about retention and bringing those girls through and keeping them involved, but there are definitely some girls to keep an eye on in the future."

As for the 2023 season, Waddington believes that his group can go one step further with only Dayna Schmid moving onto another opportunity with a Premier League team.

With stability and a strong core group of players, Waddington believes his group can once again be in premiership contention.

"We think we have the depth and the talent to challenge this season," he said.

"This group has been successful at Senior One level but we are also hopeful that we can continue that on to all grades at senior and junior level in 2023."

Central's Ella Vardy



**COACH »** Scott Waddington

**MOST RECENT PREMIERSHIP »** 2021

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# Bombers flying toward finals contention

WITH a stable core of established senior players and promising selection of junior talent, Kapunda is hopeful of pushing itself into contention for the senior one finals in 2023.

Returning established talent such as Tayla Meaney, Penny Chappell and Kim Seelander with keep the Bombers competitive, with new players and junior talent providing a positive outlook for the club.

"We have retained our key core of senior players including Tayla Meaney who is a previous competition medal winner," President Deanna Stainer said.

"We have also added some more height into the attacking circle and with a couple of additions from other clubs and other areas, we are looking quite strong."

Kapunda has appointed life member Sarah Johnson as coach of the Senior One side, with the 300-game veteran labelled as the 'ideal woman' to help the Bombers take the next step.

"Sarah coached our Sub-Junior One team last year and we saw an opportunity to bring her coaching expertise to the senior level this year," she said.

"She is involved as an assistant for the Netball SA academy program based in Clare, she has so much knowledge and expertise and she's such a good operator."

Johnson is Kapunda's third coach in three years, but Stainer says the skills she brings to the role will be invaluable as they look to lock down a long-term coach.

"We have had three coaches in three years, but to have Sarah

who has a local knowledge and passion to work with the younger players is invaluable," she said.

"Sarah is very good with seeing skill correction and at Senior One level skill matters, so she is great with that but she also drives the culture across the whole club."

"She isn't afraid to come out early and help the junior teams and their coaches as well which is really refreshing."

The shift in culture, coupled with new housing developments in the region and strong junior program, has Kapunda primed for long term success.

"We have moved 25 junior players up age groups last year and we are unique in that respect but we will do it to help accommodate junior numbers," she said.

"The culture is helping us attract players and with new residential areas being built its bringing new families to the club."

"We have had senior players come back to the club and it comes down to our club culture and doing things which players are seeking."

As for the goals for the season, Stainer wasn't putting a limit as to what the Bombers could achieve this year.

"I can see a top four finish this year for us," she said.

"With the players retained and additions from other clubs we can definitely challenge."

"A lot of people used to comment on how we were an older club with our players but not this year, we are young and fresh and the girls have bonded quickly, so we are very excited."



Kapunda's Halle Zivic...



**COACH » Sarah Johnson**  
**MOST RECENT PREMIERSHIP » 2016**

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Nuriootpa's Bridie Fitzgerald.

# New coach to lead Nuri into new era

UNDER first year coach Carla Roocke, Nuriootpa is hoping to finally make the leap into the Senior One netball finals after narrowly missing out in each of the past three years.

Nuri finished fifth in 2022, sitting just three points outside the top four, which followed a sixth-place finish in 2021.

Having not played finals in more than a decade, the challenge facing Roocke is steep. But she is more than welcoming of the challenge.

"I am really excited for the year and the challenge of coaching," Roocke said.

"We have picked up a few players and we are building a nice group and we definitely think we can challenge for the top four."

Roocke will hopefully get a chance to help her team on the court after recovering from a knee injury she sustained playing at Senior One level in round nine last year.

But for now, she is content playing her role on the side lines.

"It's pretty new for me I must admit but I am enjoying it," she said.

"Hopefully, I can get back up and going and I can help make an impact at the back end of the year as we push for finals

but I am very much enjoying the coaching side."

Roocke previously spent time at Tango in the Premier League where she played under new Gawler Central coach Scott Waddington.

The Nuri coach said she was looking forward to taking on her former mentor and hopefully getting a win against him.

"I know Scott really well from the Tango days," she said.

"It will definitely be weird going against him from the other side but they are a good team and I am looking forward to competing against him this year."

As for her own group, who have added Zoe Hoffrichter and Abi Mader from Barossa District, the goals are high and to challenge for the four.

"It has been building and the club has been close to finals but we are looking forward to the challenge," she said.

"We are just going out there to compete, do the best we can and see what happens."



**COACH »** Carla Roocke  
**MOST RECENT PREMIERSHIP »** 1986



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# South out to defend their crown

SOUTH Gawler enjoyed premiership success during the 2022 season, and the club's focused on making it back-to-back flags in the 2023 campaign.

The group has grown under coach Bec Brading and the South Gawler mentor believes the group is ready to continue their success.

"It has been a really good pre-season and we have been working on doing a lot of the same things we did last year since it worked so well," Brading said.

"There has been a real focus on injury prevention again and getting the girls nice and strong as last year was the first year

we had a solid year without being riddled with injury."

While premiership success often means large changes to the squad, that is not the case for South Gawler who have been able to add to their side. "We are excited to have Sonia Davey back after she did her ACL and missed last season and Kassidy Ryan is still eligible to play under 17s but she is one to watch out for this year as well," she said.

"Sometimes a premiership means that girls see it as time move on but we have been able to retain most of that squad and blood some juniors, it's really exciting for the club."

Brading said that her team was embracing the challenge of defending the crown and were ready for teams to bring their best against them every week.

"The girls are pumped and ready for the challenge," she said.

"It is going to be a tight competition and as reigning premiers you do have that extra pressure and get teams' best every week."

"Our girls have just been focusing on themselves and our game plan and getting the new girls settled, but we definitely think we can be right up there challenging again this year."



South Gawler's Kassidy Ryan.

COACH » Bec Brading

MOST RECENT PREMIERSHIP » 2022



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# Positivity builds for Magpies after trying 2022 season



Tanunda's Chloe Petersen.



**COACH » Toni Martin**  
**MOST RECENT PREMIERSHIP » 1986**

DESPITE a winless Senior One netball campaign in 2022, there is an air of positivity building around the Tanunda Netball Club. Buoyed by the return of past players and strong junior participation numbers, the club is confident that it can quickly turn around its fortunes heading into the 2023 season.

"It was a really tough year, not having any wins at Senior One level last year," Club President Sharon Seedsman said.

"But in the off-season we have seen some enthusiastic committee members join and they are people who are committed to change and it's been key in setting the positive vibe around the club."

Former player Toni Martin will step into the role of Senior One coach and Seedsman said she is one of several past players returning to the club after a difficult season.

"No one likes to be at the bottom of the table so it's good to see past players come back and help build a positive vibe throughout the club," she said.

"Toni will be our Senior One coach and she is a past player, and we also have three past

players who have come back to the club to try and help as well." Tanunda's senior netballers have been training as a squad for much of the pre-season while Stacey Thom is also set to return mid-season from an ACL injury. Seedsman also highlighted a pair of young players who could make a mark in senior netball.

"Chloe Petersen and Meg Wood have really impressed," she said.

"Those girls have come up and will be playing in the senior squad as Chloe did last year and they will definitely be pushing towards Senior One selection."

Tanunda is also encouraged by strong participation numbers at the club with the Magpies to field all seven senior grades for the first time in five years.

"It is the first time with seven senior teams since 2018 which is great news," Seedsman said.

"We were down to four in 2019 so to be back up to seven teams is really nice for the club."

"We are also completely full in our junior grades and have been for a long time. Hopefully those girls stay with the club and stick with us and come through into senior ranks."




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# New coach to lead Willaston's final push



Willaston's Rachael Mitchell and Sarah Hartley.

NARROWLY missing the finals in 2022, Willaston will be looking to continue their push up the ladder.

Willaston has a new coach for the 2023 season, with former Adelaide Plains netballer Samantha Hartley taking the reins for the first time.

"I am an inexperienced coach and it's the first time in the role for me after taking a step back from playing," Hartley said.

"It has been very exciting, some of the girls have come from different leagues as well as Willaston and it's great to see the potential in all of them, there is a lot of talent out at Willaston."

Having had her own experiences playing on the court, Hartley hopes that she can bring a unique outlook to coaching and helping her players develop.

"When you are a player you find things on court that coaches don't always find and it's something I am hopeful of teaching the girls," she said.

"I have had experience in the goal ring so it's useful to teach the defensive side and

movement as well as the zoning and triangle plays to make space in offence."

Hartley has been impressed with Willaston's pre-season and said they were building nicely into the season.

"The girls have had a great pre-season and they are running their hearts out and really doing the hard yards," she said.

"Rachel Mitchell is one girl, who especially for her age has impressed me and she has definitely had one of the strongest pre-seasons."

As for the goals for the season, Hartley was just hoping to continue to develop her players and have fun with the game.

"I want the girls to have some fun and get some wins because I know how tough this league can be at times," she said.

"Obviously, we want to chase the flag but the main thing for me is for the girls to be strong in their mind and give the best that they can each week."

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COACH » Samantha Hartley  
MOST RECENT PREMIERSHIP » 2015



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**Apr 29**

Balaklava v Angle Vale  
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HW Eagles v Two Wells  
Virginia v United

## ROUND 3

**May 6**

Angle Vale v HW Eagles  
United v Hamley Bridge  
Mallala v Balaklava  
Two Wells v Virginia

## ROUND 4

**May 13**

Balaklava v United  
HW Eagles v Mallala  
Virginia v Hamley Bridge  
Two Wells v Angle Vale

## ROUND 5

**May 20**

Mallala v Two Wells  
Angle Vale v Virginia  
Hamley Bridge v Balaklava  
United v HW Eagles

## ROUND 6

**May 27**

Mallala v Virginia  
Balaklava v HW Eagles  
United v Angle Vale  
Hamley Bridge v Two Wells

## ROUND 7

**Jun 3**

HW Eagles v Hamley Bridge  
Two Wells v United  
Virginia v Balaklava  
Angle Vale v Mallala

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## ROUND 8

**Jun 17**

Hamley Bridge v Angle Vale  
Balaklava v Two Wells  
United v Mallala  
Virginia v HW Eagles

## ROUND 9

**Jun 24**

United v Virginia  
Angle Vale v Balaklava  
Two Wells v HW Eagles  
Mallala v Hamley Bridge

## ROUND 10

**Jul 10**

Balaklava v Mallala  
Virginia v Two Wells  
HW Eagles v Angle Vale  
Hamley Bridge v United

## ZONE CHAMPIONSHIPS

**July 8-9 held in Barossa**

## ROUND 11

**Jul 15**

United v Balaklava  
Angle Vale v Two Wells  
Hamley Bridge v Virginia  
Mallala v HW Eagles

## ROUND 12

**Jul 22**

Virginia v Angle Vale  
Balaklava v Hamley Bridge  
HW Eagles v United  
Two Wells v Mallala

## ROUND 13

**Jul 29**

Two Wells v Hamley Bridge  
Virginia v Mallala  
Angle Vale v United  
HW Eagles v Balaklava

## ROUND 14

**Aug 5**

United v Two Wells  
Hamley Bridge v HW Eagles  
Mallala v Angle Vale  
Balaklava v Virginia

## ROUND 15

**Aug 12**

HW Eagles v Virginia  
Balaklava v Mallala  
Two Wells v Angle Vale  
Hamley Bridge v United

## ROUND 16

**Aug 19**

Angle Vale v Balaklava  
Mallala v Two Wells  
United v HW Eagles  
Virginia v Hamley Bridge

## 1ST SEMI FINAL

**August 25 - Hamley Bridge**

## 2ND SEMI FINAL

**September 2 - Balaklava**

## PRELIMINARY FINAL

**September 9 - Long Plains**

## GRAND FINAL

**September 16 - Virginia**



## Challengers await Two Wells in APFL

AFTER claiming back-to-back premierships, Two Wells once again appears to be the team to beat as we head into the 2023 Adelaide Plains Football League season.

The Roosters have vanquished Balaklava in each of the past two grand finals and both sides look like they will be once again among the teams to beat.

But could an unlikely challenger emerge from the pack?

Mallala have been perennial contenders but lost in straight sets in last year's final series, missing the grand final after finishing as minor premiers.

Will the scars prove too much to bear or can the new look Magpies bounce back into premiership contention?

Could a club like Angle Vale or Virginia make a leap into premiership contention and take Two Wells down?

United failed to win a game last season but with new coach Jarrod Allmond and the swarm of new recruits, could they surprise and vault into finals contention?

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# Owls keen to flex premiership credentials



Angle Vale's Kyle Cullen and Joel Pellicone.

ANGLE Vale is keen to build on its successful 2022 Adelaide Plains Football League season where it finished in third place on the ladder.

However, while it was able to make finals, questions remain over their legitimacy as a genuine premiership threat after being humbled by Balaklava in the elimination final.

While the 49-point defeat was not ideal, there were plenty of positives for the group to build on after a strong season for coach Ash Barnett.

"There are some pretty good sides in this competition," Barnett said.

"I think consistency will be key and holding onto that form for most of the season. You don't want to get there and make up the numbers because you want a genuine

chance when you get there."

While finishing 11-5 in the home and away season, the end to their campaign left a lot of questions unanswered for the Owls, who want their football to do the talking.

"We want to be a team that are a good tackling side and a pressure side," he said.

"We want to be hard at the footy and play for one another but also exciting to watch when we get the ball."

With an opening round clash at home against potential big improver Hamley Bridge, the Owls will want to get off to a winning start.

With clashes against Balaklava, Hummocks and Two Wells to follow a slow start could prove fatal to Angle Vale's finals chance while early wins would give them believe that they are a premiership contender.



Angle Vale's Apec Eriok.



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# Peckers look to go one further in 2023

AFTER falling short in back-to-back grand finals, Balaklava is out to go one step further in the 2023 Adelaide Plains Football League season.

The Peckers came from fourth to reach last year's grand final and for Balaklava's Shane Moss, this year is about continuing to give themselves a shot at premiership success.

"You just have to keep giving yourself an opportunity in those big games," Moss said.

"We see it as a positive that we keep giving ourselves an opportunity and you never know what can happen when you get there on the day."

Balaklava had kept a steady squad this off-seasons with only a couple of minor changes in personnel to hold the club in good stead heading into the season.

"It is a very similar side to the last couple of season with only a couple of gains and a couple of losses in terms of personnel," he said.

"We have a really talented crop of senior colts coming up into the seniors and we have had around 40 on the track for the 10 weeks of our pre-season."

Moss said that youngster Jacob Battle was one player to keep an eye on this season from a talented group of Balaklava youngsters.

"Jacob Battle has come back from under 18s at Woodville West-Torrens and he played a handful of games for us last year," he said.

"He is a really good ball user off half back and along with a couple of colts like Jayden Brownlie and Jack Tillier they can give us a lift, we are excited to see what they can do."

While Two Wells once again loom as the measuring stick, Moss said the Peckers were firmly focussed on what they can control heading into the year.

"We just need to make it happen but to get there is going to be tough because the competition is going to be so even," he said.

"Our first goal is always to make finals and to give yourself an opportunity, but we need to make sure the hard work to earn that right."



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# Bombers tipped to be big improvers

HAMLEY Bridge looks set to put itself firmly into finals contention in 2023 in its second season under coach Todd Miles.

A local boy who collected a flag with his home town in 2004, Miles returned to Hamley Bridge last season and guided his side to four wins in his first season.

Now with another pre-season under their belts, Miles has Hamley Bridge primed for a move up the ladder and even their rivals are taking notice.

"I expect Hamley Bridge to be a big improver," one rival Adelaide Plains coach told *On The Ball*.

"They showed so much improvement at the end of the year and won a few games

and I expect them to be back competing."

The endorsement is a big tick for the work Miles has done since returning as a player-coach, with the veteran prioritising local recruiting with most of the club's recruits over the past two seasons having a local connection.

A trip to last season's third place side Vale awaits in round one and a shock upset could put the Bombers firmly in contention for a finals berth.

With its core of young players, the possibilities are endless at Hamley Bridge with the club firmly believing it can cause a shake-up in the competition.



# Eagles looking one step further

AFTER missing the finals by percentage last season, Hummocks-Watchman are looking to take the next step and get back into the final race in 2023.

The past few Seasons have been a roller coaster for the Eagles who, after winning the flag in 2019, sat out the Covid affected season in 2020 before narrowly missing the finals in 2021 and 2022.

Now three years back in the competition, Hummocks are looking to establish themselves as a contender under coach Jared Wilson.

"I think I have gotten to know the boys a bit more every year," he said.

"I am a big believer in once you understand your players on and off the field, you can

work a bit closer with them and understand them better."

Adding a handful of new recruits including Angus Aldenhoe, Lucas Joyce and Will Vines to its already established group, Hummocks are hoping to make the trips to Port Wakefield even harder.

An early season test awaits against fellow upstarts Virginia with round one a potential key moment as the Eagles look to take the leap into the top four.

Win and it could be a momentum building result while a home defeat will force Hummocks into playing catch up for the rest of the year.



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*Best wishes to all teams competing in the Adelaide Plains Football and Netball seasons in 2023*

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PM1633

# Changing of the guard for Mallala

DESPITE disappointing back-to-back finals exits and a changing of the guard in playing personnel, Mallala again look set to contend for the Adelaide Plains premiership.

The Magpies have lost some key talent this off-season, headlined by the departure of club stalwart and APFL team of the year centre half back Jake Birchmore who has moved to RSMU.

Along with Birchmore, Mallala has lost Bryson Keeley to Marble Range and James and Dan Richards to Elizabeth.

Despite the change in personnel, the club will still be one of the teams to beat in the competition with several key players staying on board.

While the club hasn't splashed on any

extravagant names, its recent focus on youth and development will hold the club in good shape moving forward.

"It is all about sustainability, we want to be a smart club who backs our own," coach Liam Whitwell said.

"We can go and recruit heavily but we want to target guys who we think will fit at our club and that means guys who want to spend four or five years here and engrain themselves in what we are doing."

Mallala begins its season with a traditional ANZAC Day clash before taking on Hamley Bridge in round two.

The Magpies would like to get some early wins on the board to build momentum as it heads into its round three clash with Balaklava.



Mallala's Ian McMillan.



Mallala's Will Paynter.



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**Wishing all of the Mallala Football and Netball teams the best of luck for the upcoming season.**

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## Dynasty awaits for ruthless Roosters

AFTER claiming back-to-back flags under two different coaches, Two Wells looks set to maintain its mantle as the team to beat in the Adelaide Plains Football League this season.

After Neville Seccafien guided the Roosters in 2021, the experienced campaigner Caleb Edmead lead Two Wells to the ultimate success as a playing coach in 2022. Now history awaits Two Wells, who will look to complete a hat-trick of premierships in the 2023 season with the Roosters firmly established as the team to beat.

Already with a strong squad, the Roosters have added former Central District Bulldog Jakob Thomson for the upcoming season.

The 198cm key position player, who played a league game for Central District during the 2022

season, while also taking out the reserves best and fairest in 2021, is able to play at both ends of the ground and in the ruck. While the focus is on success, Two Wells will also look to blood its young talent much like the previous two seasons where they added a mix of youth and experience.

"Development will be the main focus going forward," Edmead said.

"There will be that player development because guys will retire in the next couple of years and we want to blood some of the young blokes to replace them."

A round one grand final rematch awaits against Balaklava and the contest will provide an early chance for Two Wells to stamp its dominance over the competitions and prove its ready for a three-peat.



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# Optimism abound for United in 2023

DESPITE not winning a game in 2022, there is an air of optimism at Long Plains with a new coach and new players set to give United a boost.

Former 216-game SANFL veteran Jarrod Allmond joins the club for the 2023 season and with him brings a wealth of experience and knowledge as the club looks to turn its fortunes around.

Allmond has tasted premiership success at SANFL level, winning a premiership with North Adelaide while also spending extended time with Woodville West-Torrens, and will help shape United as they look to improve.

As well as Allmond, United has been able to add some quality in the form of his former Woodville West-Torrens team mate, Angus Rowntree.

A former premiership player with the Eagles, Rowntree left Reynella to join Allmond at United with the in-and-under midfield to give the club's a serious boost.

Along with Allmond and Rowntree, United has also added big man Josh Hart from Division One Adelaide Footy League side Tea Tree Gully.

With the additions, United shapes to be far more competitive in 2023 and will get an early season test on ANZAC Day in its traditional clash with Mallala.

If United could surprise or push their rivals in the opening round, it will bode well for a group who will look to be one of the big improvers in the Adelaide Plains Football League this season.



New United coach playing for North Adelaide in the SANFL.



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# New coach, players has Rams ready to roll

AN active summer of recruiting and a new coach has optimism abound for a positive season at Virginia. The Rams signed experienced coach Wayne Knowles for the upcoming season after the veteran coach left Woodville South at the end of 2022. Prior to his stint with Woodville South, Knowles spent three seasons with Mannum in the River Murray Competition while also working under experienced SANFL coach Michael Godden at Woodville West Torrens. By adding Knowles, Virginia hopes to jump into the finals after narrowly missing out last

year, finishing in sixth spot just a game behind Balaklava in fourth. As well as a new coach, Virginia has also added some experienced talent with Jacob Bortoletto joining his former Woodville South coach along with young tall Tex Dowdell. The marquee signing for Virginia is Byron Sumner, a former Sturt Premiership player, and will help to fill the void left by the departing Paul Puopolo. With its new additions and a new coach, there is plenty of positivity around Virginia that it could be one of the big improvers in the APFL this year.



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Hudson Noack.

## Big season looms for BL&G's '10th team'

WHILE all clubs have been hard at work across the pre-season, the Barossa, Light & Gawler Football Association's unofficial '10th team' has also been putting in the hard yards.

Often unheralded in their efforts, the BL&G umpires have been working hard this off-season to attract new faces to the team ahead of the 2023 season. The BL&GUA had more than 60 qualified umpires on its books for the 2022 season, but is looking to expand its membership to help support growing needs in the football community, heightened by the women's football boom in the region.

"We manage all the appointments from seniors right through to under nine, so it is a lot of umpires and at times we can be stretched," BL&G umpire co-ordinator Matt Patterson said.

"We have kids who play and umpire so there are options to do that and we want to keep trying to get as many people as we can involved in umpiring as well."

While numbers are positive in the region, the need for more umpires is evident with an older umpiring panel and a new u10 women's football grade being added this year.

Patterson said that attracting new and younger umpires would be important this season and moving forward for the competition.

"We are trying to get some new blood involved, specifically those young adults and some female umpires," he said.

"We want to try and get some people in who have just finished playing or like the game and want to be involved in the game and be a part of it. It's a great way to be involved in the game once you have finished playing."

Ahead of the 2023 season, the BL&G umpires have put in a new coaching panel, with experienced umpire and 2022 golden whistle winner Hudson Noack getting involved.

"We have put a new coaching panel in," he said.

"Ryan Prentice is continuing and we have Hudson Noack joining the team as a skills and fitness coach, so it's nice to have an umpire of his experience on board."

Noack has spent time umpiring at SANFL level while also umpiring in the Tiwi Islands and also receiving the award for best umpire at the Country Championships two years running.

Patterson hopes the addition of a quality umpire like Noack to the coaching panel will help aid in the recruitment of umpires for the 2023 season.

Patterson also encouraged people of all ages to join, reminding people the vast scope of grades and ages that are covered by the BL&GUA saying there is a level for everyone to start.

To join the BL&G's 10th team or for more information, email [blg.umpires@gmail.com](mailto:blg.umpires@gmail.com).

# G&DNA ready for big season



GAWLER & District Netball Association is gearing up for another successful winter season, building on the back of a successful summer campaign and strong winter season in 2022. It was Mallala who claimed the summer crown, unseating competition benchmark Sandy Creek, who had previously claimed the winter crown over Virginia. G&DNA Secretary Jo Connolly said the focus was on continuing strong participation

numbers to help sustain the competition moving forward.

"While registrations haven't been finalised, we are hopefully of having another positive winter season this year and we will hopefully offer four junior grades and two or three senior grades," she said.

"We always work hard with people to ensure our numbers are strong even though there are many challenges around work and other sports." The competition offers its members the unique opportunity to play at the same venue week in, week out and Connolly believes this is appealing

for players who do not wish to travel long distance to play games away from home.

The competition will once again have a 14 round format and kick off with the ANZAC tribute round on Saturday, April 29 with the League also working with the town of Gawler on its facility redevelopment this year.

Other highlights on the fixture include the volunteer and charity rounds as well as carnivals during the season.

"We are looking forward to another successful season, all at the one location and if anyone wants to play get in touch with us at the association."

## Wide open premiership race awaits APNA

FRESH off a successful 2022 campaign with the return of Angle Vale to the competition, the 2023 Adelaide Plains Netball Association shapes as a wide open affair.

Unfortunately, Long Plains have been unable to field aside in the A1 competitions for the 2023 season, but they will field sides in all other seniors' grades and all junior grades.

Hummocks will enter the season as one of the favourites, after they cruised past Balaklava with a 16-goal victory to enjoy premiership success.

The premiers were powered by the impressive performance of grand final best on court Sarah Young, as well as APNA A1 competition medallist Meg Geddes with the Eagles

sweeping the awards last season.

Hummocks claimed all five senior grades and look set for more success this coming year, although challengers await the Eagles.

Last year's grand finalist Balaklava will again be around the mark, while last year's finalists Mallala and Hamley Bridge will be hopeful of making a jump into premiership contention.

In its second year back in the competition, Angle Vale may surprise with a full quota, while Two Wells and Virginia will also be hoping for improved seasons.

The APNA season kicks off with three matches on Saturday, April 22 with best players in each game to be award the ANZAC medal as part of the ANZAC round tributes.





## Eagles looking to make an impact

BUOYED by new recruits and a new coach, Gawler Eagles have made a positive start to its State League 2 campaign as the Eagles push for promotion to State League 1.

Despite finishing at the bottom of State League 2 last year, the Eagles finished with a flurry under interim coach Omar Hassan, claiming four points in their final three games.

Hassan has since been appointed to the role on a

permanent basis and Gawler has made a solid start to its campaign in 2023.

Club secretary Peter Broelman said that Hassan had quickly earned the respect of the group.

"He is a pretty quiet operator but the guys really love him," Broelman said.

"It was a long pre-season but the culture at the club is very positive and Omar is a big part of that."

At time of print, the Eagles sit in

sixth position with eight points from six matches including an impressive first up victory over Northern Demons in Port Pirie.

"The biggest difference in the current squad is depth and intensity from last year," Broelman said.

"We have added six or seven players into the first team squad, they all really love training and we have been blessed with a lot of talent to pick from."

Gawler has also turned in

impressive performances against early competition front runners Western Strikers and Adelaide University.

With a new coach and talented squad, the sky is the limit for the Eagles who are also boasting record junior numbers with several teams at capacity.

The junior program continues to thrive for the Eagles and potentially the next Riley McGree may already be in Gawler's junior ranks.



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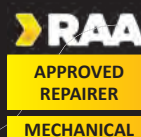
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PM0927

# Sapwell, Noone lead new look Lions

CENTRAL District Basketball Club are ready to attack the 2023 NBL1 Central campaign, with new faces set to power its men's and women's sides.

NBL veteran Rupert Sapwell will take the reins of the men's side, replacing Tracy York who pursued an opportunity with the Malaysian national team at the conclusion of last season.

Sapwell, who previously coached the Norwood Flames for six years and is the current director of sport and head basketball coach at Trinity, will provide the Lions with valuable experience on the sideline.

The Lions will have plenty of new faces suiting up for them, with the club actively recruiting during the off-season.

One of the marquee signings for Central District is Ngor Nai, who spent last season playing for the Southern Districts Spartans in the NBL1 North competition.

Standing 6'10 or roughly 208cm, Nai averaged 12 points and six rebounds a game last year and has previously played college basketball in the US for Baton-Rouge.

Sapwell said he was looking forward to working with Nai on taking the next steps in his game.



"Ngor has some traits that make him a prospect at NBL level," he said.

"His length and mobility will be a problem for our opponents. He has come to the Lions to help him take that next step, and he's going to be great for our team."

Nai will also be joined by another player with American college basketball experience in forward Kevin Baker.

Baker, who averaged 15.5 points per game at Lewis-Clarke State College last season, will help with the Lions scoring alongside returning American Branden Jenkins.

Jenkins played 11 games for the Lions last year, averaging 15.8 points per game and Sapwell was thrilled to have Jenkins back with the group.

"We are rapt to have Branden back with us

in 2023," he said.

"He is an incredible defensive player, and will be critical to our game style with our young team and we are looking forward to unleashing him on the NBL1 Central this season."

While the Lions men's team has been busy recruiting, the ladies side has been just as proactive under new head coach Joe Noone.

Noone also comes with plenty of experience, having been involved in the system for more than 20 years including most recently with West Adelaide.

The headline recruit is American centre/forward Imani Guy, who stands at 195cm tall and recently played with the University of Southern Indiana and Marian University in the US.



## Strikers looking for a perfect 10

GAWLER Strikers will be out for a slice of history as they look to make it 10 consecutive women's A grade hockey premierships this season.

The Strikers made it nine straight victories when they defeated Nuriootpa 5-0 in last year's grand final thanks to two goals from Tayla Zollo.

The competition will also have a slightly new look in 2023, with North East Hockey Club joining the men's league.

President of the Barossa Valley Hockey Association Gail Kirby said it was an exciting time for the competition.

"The BVHA are excited to have an NEHC team as a part of our A grade competition," she said.

"Not only will it bring about a better competition for our men but development for players from the combined clubs who will have an opportunity to play at a higher grade."



## TOSers set for Division Five tilt

FRESH off an unbeaten season at both A-grade and reserves level in Division Six, Trinity College Old Scholars will look to take the step up in Division Five.

The TOSers rolled their way to grand final success, defeating West Croydon by 45 points and appear well positioned to make a run at the division this season.

With head coach Stephen Couzner returning and many of the side's premiership

stars coming back to the club, Trinity look set to challenge immediately at the next level up.

After four goals in last year's grand final, Cameron Matters looks to again be a key player for the TOSers, while Bailey Puvogel is another name to watch.

Trinity's depth is also a testament to the club, with the reserves completing an undefeated season for back-to-back flags in 2022.

# Fresh faces to give Bulldogs extra bark in 2023

A STRONG summer of off-season recruiting and a new batch of talented youngsters has Central District well placed to snap its six-year SANFL finals drought.

The Bulldogs last played finals in 2017, but a host of new recruits, headlined by former junior and ex-Gold Coast Suns player Jez McLennan has Centrals set to make a leap this season.

Bulldogs captain Jarrod Schiller believes his side is well positioned to end its finals hiatus in the 2023 season.

"A lot of new faces and a lot of talented players are coming into the club which is great, even though it's taken a bit of time to gel and bond as a group," Schiller said.

"We have improved in each trial we have played and we have gotten better and better, we are looking forward to having a good and successful year."

In total, the Bulldogs have added 17 new players to their squad, with several new players including Leyton Chisolm (ex-GWS VFL), Mani Liddy and Hugo



Munn (both ex-Sturt) impressing throughout the pre-season.

The season shapes as a pivotal one for third-year coach Paul Thomas, who returned to Elizabeth after a stint as an assistant coach with Adelaide. Schiller said that Thomas was positive and looking forward to the challenge in 2023.

"Not much has changed in the mentality from Thommo (coach Paul Thomas) from last year or even the year before," he said.

"It is the same way we want to play and it's just getting better

at it, making sure everyone is on the same page and we are gelling together as a team.

"It is about everyone getting better and nothing has really changed, it's just about driving a high standard and getting a tiny bit of luck as well."

While the Bulldogs men are out to break their finals drought, Central's SANFLW side is out to make history of their own by making the SANFLW finals for the first time.

At time of print, the Bulldogs were sitting third on the table

having won three of their first five matches and were well-positioned heading into the second half of the season.

While talismanic skipper Shelby Smith remains a key part of the Central line-up, a host of talented young BL&GW girls have stepped up to make the Bulldogs finals contenders in 2023.

Willaston's Caitlin Wendland, Light product Sophie Eaton and Gawler Central's Laitiah Huynh have been pivotal in the Bulldogs fast start to the season.

Second-year coach Ben Hunt said the side was reaping the rewards of its hard work across the pre-season.

"It is a young group but they have just worked really hard across the pre-season and we have seen them get the benefit in the first few games," Hunt said.

"It's a talented group of players and they are just so keen to improve so it's nice to see them get the rewards in the first few games and hopefully it can continue in the second half of the year."

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