

Hawthorn Spartans make Inaugural Grand Final



The pride was on the line after the loss last week to Mazenod and the Spartans answered the critics in the grandest fashion - a berth in the Grand Final in their inaugural season. It was the Preliminary final against Ormond and this time the Spartans left the field as the victors and thus now face Mazenod in the big dance on Sunday 21st August.

It was the same bat time, same bat channel theory as both sides were ready to do battle at SportsCover Arena. This time the Spartans ensured that they came out of the blocks and appeared to be on early as they had the majority of the ball. Inaccurate kicking looked to rue the Spartans opportunities, but goals to Mitropoulos in the first ensured these were not wasted. 10 scoring shots for a return of 4.6

enabled the Spartans to take a 15-point lead into the first change.

The match was physical and the tackling from both sides was tremendous. Ormond started to show fresher legs as their possession started to turn into scoreboard pressure. Ormond drew close to the Spartans through some strong marking from power-forward Metz. The Monders got within 5 points until Boocock broke through inside 50, steadied and kicked a crucial goal for the Spartans to extend the lead to 11 points with 30 seconds remaining on the clock before the last change.

It was a telling last quarter effort as both sides put everything on the table - the loser would go home and their season come to an early end. It was goal for goal until Ormond got within 4 points. Both sets

of players were desperate and tired legs were getting the most of a number of players. A goal to Dellaportas was the sealer and the Spartans were minutes away from a Grand Final berth. It was a tense ending, but Hawthorn held on and confirmed the final spot in the GF by 12 points. The crowd formed a line to acknowledge the efforts of the players as they came off the ground and now in their first season the Spartans have a fantastic opportunity to complete the fairytale. It now comes down to next week where Hawthorn and Mazenod clash for the 4th time this season. It will be great to see some big numbers supporting the team as they dare to dream and win the premiership. The match is at SportsCover Arena at 9:45am on 21st August.

Hawthorn Spartans

4.6 7.10 9.13 12.15 (87)

Ormond 2.3 4.6 8.8 11.9 (75)

Goals: Mitropoulos 3, Doubakis, Pipertzis, Demetriou, Seeley, Dellaportas, Criticos, Boocock, Rieve, Terezakis

Best: Lardo, Criticos, Boocock, Demetriou, Koziaris, Handford

Injuries: Koziaris (broken wrist)

Crowd: 267 at SportsCover Arena



FFA digs in on Harry Kewell wish list

MELBOURNE Victory's bid to sign Harry Kewell hinges on both he and his management conceding significant ground in the standoff with Football Federation Australia. FFA is happy to pay Kewell \$500,000 in a promotional deal over and above his Victory earnings, but it is adamant it will not allow the Socceroos veteran to break the collective bargaining agreement. The issues to overcome are Kewell's desire to gain exemptions from FFA that would allow him control of his image rights and to sign with rivals to FFA's top-tier protected sponsors: Hyundai, Qantas and Optus. Despite not having a club, Kewell was named in a preliminary 32-man Socceroos squad for next month's World Cup qualifier against Thailand at Suncorp Stadium alongside Mark Bresciano and Vince Grella. Kewell was overlooked for Australia's 2-1 win over Wales last week in Cardiff, with Socceroos coach Holger Osieck having expressed concerns over his fitness. But Osieck stressed that provided his fitness improved, Kewell was in contention to play Thailand in Brisbane on September 2. It is believed FFA wrote to Victory underlining a belief that allow-

ing such exemptions would set a dangerous precedent. The worst scenario for FFA would be to allow Kewell the exemptions and trigger a situation where the short-term gain undermines the A-League's economic platform. FFA's willingness to pay Kewell \$500,000 (\$250,000 up front with the balance dependent on performance) shows its commitment to luring him back to Australia. The promotional deal

is the largest offered to a player by FFA and will handsomely reward Kewell above his deal with Victory, which will pay Kewell 80 per cent of any increase in membership, marketing and gate revenue.

The sticking point remains Kewell's request for the sponsorship and image rights exemptions, which have never been allowed in the A-League's six seasons.

PAN HELLENIC GAMES DARWIN 2011

THE VICTORIAN WOMEN'S FOOTBALL TEAM

INVITES YOU TO ATTEND A FUN-FILLED EVENING IN A BID TO SUPPORT THEIR SUCCESS IN DARWIN 2011

DATE & TIME //
6pm Sunday, August 28th 2011

VENUE //
Johnny Sorrentos
(251 Richardson St Albert Park)

PRICE //
\$30 tickets at the door, or \$25
via facebook event attendance confirmation.

ENQUIRIES PLEASE CALL //
Nick 0408 992 228 or Heleena 0404 935 264

THE NIGHT WILL INCLUDE FINGER FOOD
A CELEBRITY MC & LOTS OF ENTERTAINMENT

