

# Womens Football 2018 – Eastern Suburbs AFC



## Women's Football – 2018 Season

2018 we all witnessed some challenging and turbulent times in terms of New Zealand Women's Football, all highly publicised. Throughout this Eastern Suburbs remained highly focused on Women's Football development providing player opportunities to over 600 girls and women, representing 23% of the total role at the club.

The continued strength of our in-house competition provides a unique platform for our young players to fall in love with the game. In line with the clubs continued efforts to retain players of all ability it was particularly pleasing to see a significant number of 13<sup>th</sup> grade teams participating for the first time in our history.

Our inaugural invitational tournament was held for 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> graders with the women's committee team providing an outstanding format and product for the travelling teams. Representation from as far afield as Tauranga and Cambridge added some new names for the Auckland teams to compete against.

12<sup>th</sup> Grade team selected for Weir Rose via the Skill Centre process AFF instigated achieved a credible second place in the qualifying tournament selection process

Overall Eastern Suburbs had a strong showing in all representative leagues this season with the following results;

- (10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> does not hold scoring)
- 12<sup>th</sup> Grade – 3<sup>rd</sup> Place
- 13<sup>th</sup> Grade – 1<sup>st</sup> Place - 16 wins from 16
- 14<sup>th</sup> Grade – 3<sup>rd</sup> Place
- 16<sup>th</sup> Grade – 7<sup>th</sup> Place
- Women's Champs – 2<sup>nd</sup> Place
- Premier Reserves – 6<sup>th</sup> Place
- Premier – 2<sup>nd</sup> Place

The 2018 season heralded a new focus across the club putting player pathway development at the centre of the decision making. The ethos from Danny Hay began to influence pathway development which shaped women's football at Eastern Suburbs. Identification of talent and providing accelerated pathways became a standard mode of operation after the club negotiated some early dispensation challenges with AFF. Successful trials saw players being offered different training opportunities, for instance training with boys teams for a period of time. The learnings from these trials will be brought into the planning for next season where we hope to extend the opportunities to a wider group of players.

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We are delighted to see **Grace Jale** being named in the full NZ Football Ferns squad, her progress remains an inspiration for our young aspiring Football Ferns.

Very impressive to see so many players taking advantage of the Eastern Suburbs Ole training programme. We are looking forward to seeing the impact an extra 72 training sessions will have on the players when we flow into the pre-season.

## **Looking forward**

Following the committees success with the invitational tournament we plan to replicate the format and launch this for 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> grade teams next season. The club continues to look at providing a platform for the tier 2 teams to compete as well as the elite teams. This will mean further non-Metro tournaments will be investigated.

Eastern Suburbs are working closely with AFF to open up additional opportunities for our players so that we can field more than 3 senior women's teams. As the only club currently operating 3 teams in the top 'available' leagues, our desire is to negotiate a better home for our youth development squad as the gap between Championship and Reserves is quite significant.

To help support the player transition from Girls football to Women's football, Eastern Suburbs will publish our training and squad selection process that will spell out our expectations for senior players and how each player can positively influence their own player pathway – this document will be provided before pre-season begins.

Finally, Eastern Suburbs and the Women's Football Committee would like to thank all players and parents for supporting the club on and off the pitch. We look forward to a great 2019 season with our excellent coaching team of Mauro, Phill, Rebekah, Jesus, Beth, Tayla, Darcey, Corina and Kaitlyn.