

## 10 YEARS OF AUFC WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

This year is the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Women playing football at the Adelaide University Football Club, having started back in 2013 with a single team known as The Girl Guides, coached by Michael Turner.

In this initial season numbers were low, with The Girl Guides struggling to field a full team in several games. This was most notable against The Poo Rakers, taking to the field with only 12 players, 2 short of the required number for an official game, and 6 short on the field. Although short on numbers against a full side, by half time The Poo Rakers wanted the unofficial game called off, with them trailing by 6 goals!

Two years later in 2015, and numbers have increased. Selection is no longer an excuse for Coach Stephen Baxter to head to the pub post-training for a schnitz and beer special; real selection to ensure all players get a fair go was required!

Along with these numbers came The Girl Guides first finals campaign, winning a tight Semi-Final at Bob Neil #1, before playing in their first Grand Final against Angle Fail for the Division 2 Premiership. With a minute to play, The Girl Guides trailed by a point. The ball was at the wrong end of the ground, Premiership T-Shirts were being handed out on the Angle Fail bench, and SportsBet were quoting odds of 1000 - 1 for a Girl Guides Premiership. However, The Girl Guides had not given up. They moved the ball the length of the ground in 30 seconds to score a point to level things up. With extra time imminent, Angle Fail rushed to get the ball back into play, to their detriment. Sargent Schulz gathered the poor kick-in, saluting as her late snap sailed through for another behind, seeing The Girl Guides win their first ever Premiership, by a single point. This was the only piece of silverware brought home to the club for the year, but damn it was celebrated long and hard by all.

In 2016, with Women playing Aussie Rules on the rise, the club had recruited enough players to enter two Women's teams, with both reaching the Preliminary Final in their respective Divisions.

2017 was the most successful year to date, becoming a powerhouse of Women's football in the state by fielding 3 teams for the first time. The club appointed the highly experienced Krissie Steen as A Grade Coach, forming Steen Machine and Her Terminators. And didn't they live up to that name. By Round 3, the Kebab (Kelly Barltrop) had already kicked 25 goals. The Girls Terminated their opponents at every venue, from Swim Between the Flags Memorial Oval down South against Christ is a Beach, to Far, Far, FAR

Away Field out North against Angle Fail, they went through the minor rounds undefeated! After a close Semi- Final win against The Toothless Hounds at Bob Neil #1, the team went into the big dance with confidence at The Barton. And in an absolute cliff-hanger, that to this day still has more viewers than Sylvester Stallone's epic thriller Cliffhanger, Steen Machine and Her Terminators brought home The Blacks first Division 1 Women's Premiership Flag, winning 20.7.127, to Smallsbury 1.3.9! As they say, good kicking is good football; but nothing beats a good old-fashioned belting, with this still being the largest winning margin in a Division 1 Women's Grand Final! Ruth "Little Miss Sporty" Wallace took out the League Leading Goal Kicker award, and 22 players from this squad were drafted to the inaugural SANFLW competition.

In a double celebration for the club, Hollywood and His Rising Stars also won the Premiership in the Division 4 competition.

2018 saw Lozza and Her Dodgy Tradies win the Division 1 Reserves Premiership, while The Kebab was again clearly laden with garlic sauce, taking home the Division 1 Leading Goal Kicker award. The depth in talent at The Blacks was now truly evident, with 35 players from Division 1 and 1 Reserves playing in the Women's SANFL competition.

In 2019 we went back to our rightful place of top in Division 1, with Good Moods and His Happy Little Vegemite's once again bringing home the Premiership Flag. For the first time the League Best and Fairest award, the Dutschke Medal, was awarded to a player from Adelaide University, with "Johnny Walker Black Label", Stephanie Walker, winning in only her second season at The Blacks.

The 2020 season was interrupted by a stalker called Rona, with the pandemic forcing 3 months' worth of preseason to be crammed into 3 weeks. The season saw both the A and B grade teams Steven Bradbury their way into finals, with King Kernahan and the League choosing to include 5 teams in finals for the first time in the Women's competition.

In 2022, with 3 Women's teams, and numbers again booming at the club, we regained our throne as the largest Women's Aussie Rules club in the state.

Since a female first pulled on the Black with White V in 2013, Adelaide University Football Club has had over 40 players drafted to the SANFLW. The Club has also produced a number of players that have gone on to the AFLW competition, with "Mary Jane" Marijana Rajcic, Ruth "Little Miss Sport" Wallace, Sophie "Ninja" Li, Anne "The Hatchett Job" Hatchard, Justine "Time" Mules, and Courtney "Chewy on Your Boot" Gum, all playing for the Adelaide, Jess "Steady Eddy" Edwards playing for Carlton, Stephanie "Johnny Walker

Black Label” Walker and “Mashed Taiters” Tait Mackrill playing for GWS, Ebony “The Animal” O’Dea playing for Collingwood and Port Adelaide, Nadia “Hey Bert” Von Bertouch playing for St Kilda, and “Extra Long Eyelashes” Ilish Ross playing for Richmond, all at the elite level.

Women’s football in general has also seen an overwhelming change in the dynamic for the sport since we first joined the South Australian Women’s Football League, back in the day. There are now nearly more Divisions than there were teams at the time The Blacks entered the SAWFL.

The significant number of players who have progressed into SANFLW, VFLW and AFLW are a testament to the culture built both on and off the field. One thing which remains as strong as ever from that very first match in 2013 against Giggle Farm at Bob Neil #2, is the ability for teams to come together and build incredible bonds. There is an uncompromising pursuit for all that have donned the Black with White V, that is the ability to consume cruisers as though a lockdown is imminent, on any given day.

The club has been well-guided by some incredible players, coaches and administrators. From the beginning its new Female members were introduced to the long-held traditions of the club, such as Chocka’s conventions for nicknames, and the drinking of Green Ginger Wine. Tess “The Postie” Baxter, the second coach of the Women’s teams, was a significant factor to the growth in numbers at the club in the early days, and a key orchestrator in the appointment of “The Steen Machine”, Krissie Steen to The Blacks. Steen Machine guided the Women’s contingent through its most successful period to date, winning our very first Division 1 Women’s Premiership.

And we can’t mention Women’s football at The Blacks without mentioning Julie “The Powermedic” Power, who has played or coached in every year Women have played at Adelaide University Football Club, be it in the A grade, B grade or C grade, helping to develop, and now birth, congratulations Jules, the next generation of players at The Blacks.

Time has flown since that April day in 2013 out at Bob Neil #2, but one thing that has not flown by is that The World’s Greatest Football Club is a better place since that day, now that Women can play alongside the Men.