Albury 2014

A large group of very excited young players boarded the bus on Sunday the 13th of April for the Under 15 Australian Volleyball Cup in Albury NSW. For the bulk of the group it was their first adventure with the Heathfield Volleyball program and a 12 hour bus ride was the perfect introduction to test their resolve.

The draw was extremely busy on the first day with some teams fitting in 3 games and 2 duties, basically starting at 8.30am and finishing at 7pm with only a one game break. Again a good introduction to patience, resilience and support the program is renowned for. The day was made much easier with the Breakfast, lunch and Dinner provided by the fantastic catering group of Jen and Rob Ambagtsheer and Mandy and Tony Mark-Seymour. In fact the entire week was made so much easier with their work. The other area of support was from the teams themselves with fantastic cheering right from the first game.

The Boys blue team went through the competition undefeated with too many attack options for other teams to cope with. Jayden Fathers dominated the competition with his high leaping spiking and massive blocking power. Lucas Mark-Seymour, Royce Cotter and Jayden Elsworth also hit high and hard all week. They were brilliantly supported with great defense and quality setting from Henry Ambagtsheer, Jamie Muzzy, Sam Binder and Jesse Maker. Tim Belsole owned the back-court in the libero role letting nothing hit the ground without a fight. Coach, Jason Matulick guided the group superbly all week and was able to throw the team around and still maintain control. This was only the second time Heathfield has won the boys competition in the 16 years of the competition so was a fantastic achievement.

The Girls Blue team also had an amazing week gaining a bronze in a very tough, even competition. As most of the team are in year 8 it was their first foray into this level of match play and they coped superbly. The experience of the year 9 players, Anna Schoof and Gemma Giannes guided the new players on and off the court with great play, advice and role modeling. Alice Kelleher, Isabella Baldwin, Abbie Gardner and Olivia Swan owned the net with high leaping spikes and intimidating blocks. Georgia James covered the court with lightning speed and placed the ball in a great position with consistency far beyond her years of experience. Ella Lawson hit some clutch balls under pressure and Eden Cagliuso controlled the back court all week taking on the difficult libero role superbly. The girls developed rapidly over the term as they were beaten soundly by Norwood only 5 weeks ago in the Gold Ball competition. However they were able to beat Norwood in the minor round in a classic 5 setter. Norwood went on to win the Cup showing how close the competition really was.

The Boys Maroon and White teams were picked to be even and that was proven throughout the week. Both teams just missed the top 2 in the first pool so the best they could finish was 5th. Both teams won all remaining games and eventually played each other for the 5th position. White defeated Maroon in the minor round in a close 5 setter and this result was reversed in with Maroon finishing with bragging rights in another hard fought 5 setter. All players showed unbelievable improvement over the week with their individual skills, team play and game knowledge. Cooper Spry and Charlie Day were recognized for their amazingly rapid transformation during the week with the presentation of the Heathfield badge.
The Girls Maroon team also made remarkable improvements over the week winning many games that at the start of the week did not look all that possible. A badge was awarded to Cassidy Cooper for her speed and control in the back court taking on the Libero role with unbridled enthusiasm.

South Australia again won the Champion State with Norwood and Heathfield taking out so many of the medals. It was an amazing week for Heathfield taking out a Gold, a Bronze, 5th, 6th and 8th. The coaches continue to be blown away with the development that occurs during this week and cements the conviction that it is well worth investing time to this event. A huge thanks to the parent catering group mentioned earlier for their work making sure we were all fed quality food for athletes in competition. Thanks to older students Lucy Ambagtsheer, Bailey Sturrus, Maddy Mark-Seymour and Cheniah Potts for their help during trainings and over the week of the competition. A special thanks to the Volleyball coaching staff for giving up a week of their holidays, Lachy Abbott, Mia Heikkonen and Peter Giannes, without their time and effort this trip would simply not happen.

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