

2016

Sonney Bartholomew Dominates Season

Keith Rees from West Wyalong Girral was elected as the Northern Riverina League's new President from Peter McFadyen, who stood down after five years in charge of the League. Rees had served as the League's Treasurer for the previous ten years. Hillston's Natasha Mahy replaced Ian Aubrey in the Secretary's position who also stepped aside after five years and Tullibigeal's Leanne Imrie took over the Treasurer's role from Keith Rees. Malcolm Williams from Ungarie was elected the League's Junior Football co-ordinator taking over from Mark Daniher.

The League again consisted of the same six teams – Lake Cargelligo, Ungarie, Hillston, West Wyalong Girral, Condo-Milby and Tullibigeal.

Three of the clubs appointed new coaches with Hillston signing on Stephen Sutherland as their non-playing coach, Condo-Milby appointing Cameron Brown and Sonney Bartholomew taking over at Tullibigeal. Lake Cargelligo retained the services of Aaron Hart and Chris McFadyen as co-coaches with Ryan McClintock at Ungarie and Simon Clarke at West Wyalong Girral remaining as their club's leaders.

The finals system reverted back to a final four with only six teams in the competition. The final five for the finals had been in operation since 2000.

The Ungarie Club celebrated their 100 year anniversary having formed as a club during the First World War years in 1916. A highlight of their celebrations was in Round 9 when former local and AFL great Terry Daniher made a guest appearance against West Wyalong Girral. Terry is one of Ungarie's favourite sons who became a champion player at Essendon in the AFL where he played over 300 games and booted almost 500 goals for the Bombers and also skippered Essendon to back-to-back premierships in 1984 and 1985.

The League also decided to name the medal presented to the player voted as the 'Best on Ground' in the Grand final, the Jim Daniher Medal, after the champion Ungarie skipper who is recognised by most as the League's premier player in the League's history.

Evans Medal

Tullibigeal's coach Sonney Bartholomew won the Evans Medal as the League's Best and Fairest player with thirty three votes which was his second medal success in the last three years. Ungarie's Wayne Archibald was runner-up with twenty five votes with Lake Cargelligo's Aaron Hart Lake Cargelligo third on twenty three votes. For the tough and tenacious Sonney Bartholomew it will be a season he won't forget after taking out the League's Best and Fairest award, Coach of the Year, Best on Ground honours in the grand final, premiership coach and also taking out his Club's Best and Fairest award.

The League Best and Fairest award had a name change to the Evans Medal. The award originated in 1949 as the GP Evans Cup and in 1972 changed to the Evans Memorial Trophy, before deciding to present a medal to the victor this year.

Sanson Trophy

Lake Cargelligo's Mitchell Johnson won the Sanson Trophy for the Northern Riverina League's leading goalkicker in the home and away series with sixty six goals. Johnson booted a further nine goals during the finals to finish the season with seventy five goals. Tullibigeal's full forward Steven Hickson was runner-up to Johnson with forty eight goals during the season and brought up his half century for the season during the finals when he added a further twelve goals to finish with sixty goals. Both Johnson and Hickson booted ten goals in a game during the season with

Johnson landing ten goals against Condo-Milby in Round 14 and Hickson in Round 13 against Condo-Milby. West Wyalong Girral's Geoff Walker booted eleven goals in Round 1 against Condo-Milby as did Lake Cargelligo's Trevor Quarrel in Round 4, also against Condo-Milby.

Presentation Night

The Northern Riverina League presentation night for both the senior football and netball best and fairest vote count was held at the West Wyalong S&C Sports Club. Guest speaker for the night was Steve Mahar, the AFL Regional Manager of the Southern NSW region and who is based in Canberra.

Football awards included the League Best and Fairest winner which was won by Tullibigeal coach Sonney Bartholomew, who also won the Coach of the Year award. Mitchell Johnson from Lake Cargelligo won the Sanson Trophy as the League's leading goalkicker. The Rising Star award went to Codan Frankel from Tullibigeal. The winner of the AFL NSW/ACT Northern Riverina League Volunteer of the Year award was awarded to West Wyalong Girral President Jim Davis. Hillston's Ken McIntosh was awarded an AFL Merit Award for his long service to the code. A new award, the NRFL Umpire of the Year, was presented to Greg Wood.

Season Summary

Tullibigeal claimed their third premiership in four years, when after recovering from a big loss in the second semi final, downed favourites Lake Cargelligo in the grand final.

Reigning premiers from 2015, Ungarie started the season in top form winning their first five games, which saw them elevated to early flag favourites for the season. However the Magpies lost two in a row, firstly against Tullibigeal and then to Lake Cargelligo in Round 6 and Round 7, which saw three teams, Tullibigeal, Lake Cargelligo and Ungarie equal on top on five wins each from the first seven rounds and the race for the premiership up for grabs.

Round 8 was abandoned due to the wet state of the grounds and the closure of McAlister Oval, West Wyalong. It was the first time since 1971 that an entire round was called off with no points given.

Ungarie celebrated their 100 year anniversary as a club in 2016 and in Round 9 former Ungarie local and AFL great Terry Daniher made a guest appearance for the Magpies. Terry joined his brother Chris in the team in the only occasion two ex AFL players had played in a game together in the Northern Riverina League.

By Round 11 Lake Cargelligo had taken a one game clear lead of the ladder ahead of Tullibigeal and Ungarie after Lake Cargelligo had beaten Tullibigeal in Round 10 and Tullibigeal had beaten Ungarie in Round 11.

Ungarie's fourth loss for the season in Round 12 to Lake Cargelligo dropped the Magpies back to third place on the ladder.

The Round 12 clash at Hillston was called off at halftime when Condo-Milby failed to return for the second half when injuries left the team short of players.

West Wyalong Girral, who held down fourth spot all season, needed to defeat Hillston in Round 15 to hold onto a position in the finals. Although a win and percentage in front of the Swans, a forfeit by West Wyalong Girral to the Swans in Round 5 when the Bulldogs did not receive a point for the forfeit loss, a victory to the Swans would place them in the finals. West Wyalong Girral won by thirty three points to qualify for the finals.

The Round 15 game between Ungarie and Condo-Milby was called off during the third quarter when an incident on the boundary erupted involving players and spectators.

Tullibigeal defeated Lake Cargelligo in Round 15 to draw level on top of the ladder with eleven wins each but Lake Cargelligo were minor premiers due to a superior percentage.

Hillston's four wins for the season were their three games against Condo-Milby and a forfeit from West Wyalong Girral. Condo-Milby's second season back in the League saw them again winless.

2016 Ladder

		P	W	L	Pts	Perc
1.	Lake Cargelligo	14	11	3	47	175%
2.	Tullibigeal	14	11	3	47	150%
3.	Ungarie	14	10	4	44	
4.	West Wyalong Girral	14	6	8	31	
5.	Hillston	14	4	10	26	
6.	Condo-Milby	14	0	14	14	

Finals

1st Semi-Final at Lake Cargelligo

Ungarie	4-5,	14-11,	20-14,	25-19-169	defeated
West Wyalong Girral	3-0,	5-1,	8-3,	11-5-71	by 98 points

Goals Ungarie – Ben Fixter 6, Connor Neyland 4, Ryan McClintock 3, Kyle Archibald 3, Jayden Erwin 2, Kody Whiley 2, Lachlan Rowling 1, Chris Daly 1, Derryn Clayton 1, Chris Daniher 1, Bryce Koop 1.

Goals West Wyalong Girral – Jeremy Lamb 3, Peter Turner 1, Jesse Hampton 1, Grant Langford 1, Ben Lamb 1, Ben Fitzgerald 1, Bailey Anderson-Lynch 1, Will McMartin 1, Patty Chaffer 1.

Best Ungarie – Ben Fixter, Connor Neyland, Kody Whiley, Sterling Ross, Josh Ward, David Barron.

Best West Wyalong Girral – Ben O’Kane, Ben Fitzgerald, Jesse Hampton, Grant Langford, Patty Chaffer, Jim Davis.

Ungarie easily accounted for West Wyalong Girral with a comprehensive ninety eight points victory. Following a relatively competitive first quarter the Magpies virtually buried any hopes of a Bulldogs victory when Ungarie booted ten goals to two goals to have the game wrapped up at halftime. Ungarie again dominated in the third quarter to extend their unassailable lead to eighty four points at the last change. Forwards Ben Fixter, with a six goal best on ground performance and Connor Neyland with four goals, stood out for the Magpies.

2nd Semi-Final at Ungarie

Lake Cargelligo	5-6,	6-11,	12-17,	15-21-111	defeated
Tullibigeal	1-0,	4-3,	6-3,	10-5-65	by 46 points

Goals Lake Cargelligo – Mitchell Johnson 5, Aaron Hart 3, Jaden Kelly 3, Luke Robertson 2, Tom Byrnes 1, Mitchell Hart 1.

Goals Tullibigeal – Steve Hickson 3, Brant Frankel 2, Andrew Brasnett 1, Broden Imrie 1, Nick Prince 1, Codan Frankel 1, Joel Ridley 1.

Best Lake Cargelligo – Jaden Kelly, Aaron Hart, Mitchell Johnson, Tony Aubrey, Chris McFadyen, Tony Hayward.

Best Tullibigeal – Sonney Bartholomew, Alaster Jenkins, Josh Lidgerwood, Adam Hague, Jack Payne, Kieran Fair.

Lake Cargelligo won through to the grand final with a comfortable victory over Tullibigeal by forty six points. The Tigers led from the start to finish and never looked in danger of defeat. Their first quarter onslaught, when they booted four goals in the first fifteen minutes, put the Grasshoppers under pressure early on and they never recovered. Tullibigeal reduced the lead to twenty points

at halftime and then two early goals in the third quarter lifted their expectations but the Tigers replied landing the last five goals of the quarter to take a match winning lead of fifty points at the last change.

Preliminary Final at West Wyalong

Tullibigeal	5-5,	9-7,	13-8,	15-12-102	defeated
Ungarie	1-1,	3-4,	6-7,	10-9-69	by 33 points

Goals Tullibigeal – Steve Hickson 6, Brodie Imrie 2, Andrew Brasnett 1, Phillip Brown 1, Dan Bendall 1, Alaster Jenkins 1, Nick Prince 1, Sonney Bartholomew 1, Codan Frankel 1.

Goals Ungarie – Derryn Clayton 3, Kris Archibald 2, Wayde Archibald 2, Jayden Erwin 1, Chris Daly 1, Ryan McClintock 1.

Best Tullibigeal – Kieran Fair, Steve Hickson, Brayden Davis, Phillip Brown, Dan Bendall, Ben Killen.

Best Ungarie – Chris Daniher, Ryan McClintock, Wayde Archibald, Kris Archibald, Sterling Ross, David Barron.

Tullibigeal defeated Ungarie by thirty three points in the Preliminary final. The Grasshoppers bounced back from their poor performance in the second semi final to stun the Magpies, booting the first four goals of the game and take a twenty eight points quarter time lead. Tullibigeal increased their lead to over fifty points through the third quarter to completely shut the Magpies out of the game. Tullibigeal's midfielders in centremen Dan Bendall, Kieran Fair and coach Sonney Bartholomew gave the Tullibigeal forward line plenty of opportunities, especially Steve Hickson who booted six goals.

Grand Final at Lake Hillston

Tullibigeal	4-0,	8-2,	10-6,	13-9-87	defeated
Lake Cargelligo	3-0,	6-1,	7-4,	9-4-58	by 29 points

Goals Tullibigeal – Phillip Brown 3, Steve Hickson 3, Andrew Brasnett 2, Brant Frankel 2, Josh Smith 1, Broden Imrie 1, Codan Frankel 1.

Goals Lake Cargelligo – Mitchell Johnson 4, Aaron Hart 2, Mitchell Hart 1, Jaden Kelly 1, Luke Robertson 1.

Best Tullibigeal – Sonney Bartholomew (best on ground), Brayden Davis, Dan Bendall, Codan Frankel, Adam Hague, Jack Payne.

Best Lake Cargelligo – Aaron Hart, Dylan Hately, Greg McFadyen, Russell Thorpe, Tony Aubrey, Mitchell Johnson.

The Tullibigeal Grasshoppers won their third premiership in four years when they outplayed their Lake Cargelligo rivals by twenty nine points. After finishing the season as minor premiers and starting as favourites, for Lake Cargelligo it was their third successive grand final loss. The game was played with both defences dictating play with avenues to goal difficult for both teams. Tullibigeal started the game full of running, booting the first two goals of the game, and in a tight hard fought first half the Grasshoppers led by thirteen points at halftime. Lake's tactics of playing the man cost them dearly when they had a player red carded for the game in the first quarter and then lost playmaker Jaden Kelly in the second quarter. Tullibigeal increased their lead to twenty points at three quarter time and when Steve Hickson and Phil Brown goaled for Tullibigeal early in the last term stretching their lead to more than five goals, it virtually ended any chance for the Tigers. For Tullibigeal, coach Sonney Bartholomew led his team in a sensational 'best on ground' performance to win the Jim Daniher Medal. He was ably supported by midfielders Dan Bendall, Codan Frankel and Brayden Davis and backmen Jack Payne and Adam Hague. Tiger's coach Aaron Hart was his team's best with backmen Dylan Hately, Greg McFadyen, Russell Thorpe and Tony Aubrey all among the Tiger's best players.

Umpires for the grand final were Rod Daniher, Peter Ward and Andrew Tough.

Tullibigeal's 2016 selected premierships team was –

B	Adam Hague	Alaster Jenkins	James Fyfe
HB	Kieran Fair	Jack Payne	Ben Killen
C	Brayden Davis	Sonney Bartholomew (c)	Joel Ridley
HF	Steve Hickson	Brant Frankel	Josh Lidgerwood
F	Andrew Brasnett	Nathan Imrie	Nick Prince
Ruck	Phil Brown	Dan Bendall	
Rover	Josh Smith		
Interchange	Codan Frankel, Broden Imrie, Murphy Payne, Jarrod Fair.		

Representative Football

The Northern Riverina League played the Central West League on May 21 at Dubbo in their representative game. CWL 15-11-101 defeated NRL 11-8-74. NRL goalkickers were Jay Mitchell 3, Steve Hickson 2, Jesse Hampton 2, Greg McFadyen 1, John Nolan 1, Kody Whiley 1, Tyrell Charters 1 with best players Tyrone Johnstone (NRL best player), Steve Hickson, Jesse Hampton, Aaron Hart, Mitchell Hart, Tyrell Charters.

The NRL 2016 representative team was – Nathan Sanson (coach)

B	David Aubrey (LC)	Todd McCarten (Hill)	Scott Sutherland (Hill)
HB	Greg McFadyen (LC)	Mitchell Hart (LC)	Brodie Atkinson (CM)
C	Tyrone Johnstone (CM)	Nathan Sanson (LC)	Kody Whiley (Ung)
HF	Jesse Hampton (WWG)	Steve Hickson (Tulli)	Wade Riley (LC)
F	Tyrell Charters (CM)	Jay Mitchell (Hill)	Scott Golding (LC)
Ruck	John Nolan (LC)	Aaron Hart (LC)	
Rover	Cameron Brown (CM)		
Interchange	Wes Kendall (LC), Joe Hedger (CWL), Arend Boog (CWL).		

Late withdrawals left the team short and Wes Kendall and Scott Golding plus two Central West League players filled in.

In the Under 14's CWL 10-8-68 defeated NRL 2-1-13 and the Under 12's NRL 11-13-79 defeated CWL 6-2-38. There was no Under 17's game played.

Junior Football

In the Under 17's grand final Lake Cargelligo 13-6-84 defeated West Wyalong Girral 4-5-29. Ungarie 4-7-31 narrowly defeated Lake Cargelligo 4-6-30 in the Under 14's and Ungarie also narrowly defeated West Wyalong Girral 3-4-22 to 3-3-21 in the Under 11's.

Lake Cargelligo made a clean sweep of the junior best and fairest awards with Lincoln Kirby winning the Under 17's, Cody Collins the Under 14's and Ashton Kendall winning the Under 11's Best and Fairest awards.