

## 2023 EDJBT REPORTS



### BOYS

#### 12.1

The 12.1 Boys were buzzing with excitement to begin the EDJB Tournament on Australia Day. With a mix of experienced tournament players and a couple of fresh faces, they set themselves to compete in the A Division.

Game's 1 and 2 were against the Melbourne Tigers and Knox Raiders. Both closely contested, The Dragons took the win over Melbourne but went down fighting against Knox. They showed class and resilience playing these teams and fought being down in both games.

Game 3 saw the boys face the Frankston Blues. The talk of the competition was the mullet that accompanied their biggest player. After a contested first half, Frankston walked away with the win.

The team returned Sunday morning for Game 4 and Game 5, ready to go into battle with Kilsyth and the newly formed QLD All Star team. They brought grit, determination and teamwork and took a 6 point win over Kilsyth to secure a place in the top 4 for a finals berth before going down to the QLD team.

The Dragons faced Sandringham in the elimination final this afternoon and the game was closely contested yet again. They worked hard to peg back the lead, but ultimately fell just short of the win.

The 12.1 boys can be commended for their efforts and teamwork during the tournament. The boys were consistent with their half court offence and really improved their ability to score as a team. Huge improvements since the final game from last year and they demonstrated that they are a VC calibre team. A big thank you to our coach Jaden Lai and our parent group for their support all weekend.

Go Dragons (Megan – TM)

#### 12.3

Coming in off the Christmas break, the boys hit the ground running and battled hard against the homecourt team of Diamond Valley. Passing and teamwork was strong, but the DV Eagles held on to win in a respectable loss. It was then on to Eltham. Our big boys played strong and tough, bringing in the rebounds – whilst our guards kept busy, harassing anything that came their way. Got the “W” and moved on to the next game against Bulleen. The coaches excelled, and had their team up and about. Tactics and team work prevailed, with our second win for the Tournament.

South Adelaide are a strong club, and they used their height and shooting skills to over throw the Dragons – valiant in defeat – we took away some lessons...and some tips from SA - on how to handle our next opponent – Kilsyth.

We toiled, chased, and fought hard – but just couldn't peg back the score. A few serious injuries did not help the outcome. A win for Kilsyth.

Dragons did enough to make the Semis – where we met the Undefeated South Adelaide team.

With a reduced team, we gave all we had, but were handed a loss by a well drilled, slick opponent, who eventually went onto win the big prize.

The tournament will make us tighter as an outfit, and brought the boys closer to each other and their Coaches.

Not Victorious, but definitely not losers either. Great few days all round. (Simon – TM)

#### 12.4

The Boys U12-4s had a tough grading, only winning one game with lacklustre defence and low energy. The main focus of the tournament was to up the effort on defence. Opening the tournament with a win was great for the boys confidence and the first iteration of our full court press worked very well beating Hawthorn 3 by 10 points. In the second game the boys came out unfocused and had an early deficit. However, the boys rallied well and, after a buzzer beater from the other team, the game was a draw at 29 a piece against Ringwood 3. The next game against Eltham saw the defence one again improved drastically, Eltham scoring only 12 points, mainly off free throws. However, the offence wasn't great with a lot of clogging the key and shots not falling but an 11-point win regardless. The next game for the boys was against Eddie Betts who coached the best team in the comp (3-0 at that point) in front of a huge crowd. The boys came out the gate with great fire going up for nearly the whole game. However, the opposition came back and a mixture of nerves, excellent shooting from the other team and shots not falling for us resulted in a hard fought 6-point loss. We then played Waverly 3 who we had previously lost to by a large margin in grading. The boys played suffocating defence and ran transition very well resulting in a 30-point win. By far the best game the boys played. The semi finals against Ringwood was really tough. The boys had a slow start going down by 11 in the first half. In the second half the boys fired up and sparked a come back but the refs were atrocious and didn't help already being down. That combined with a great shooting performance from Ringwood made it hard for the boys. A late 3 gave us hope but ultimately, we lost by 6. Overall, the tournament was a tremendous effort from the boys and the improvement I saw was vast. Good overall result. (Savi – Coach)

#### 12.5

As the u12.5 boys were heading into the Australia day tournament I had quite high hopes for them as I believe we outclass many teams of similar ranking and throughout the tournament they impressed me even more than I originally thought. After losing our first game to a Bulleen team that I think we should have handled, the boys kept their heads high and came out in the next game as a completely different team. We ended up going 3-2 over the group stages with dominant wins over most teams and a heartbreaking 2 point loss to an extremely strong Nunawading team, who I knew we'd have another crack at in the finals. Come semi-finals, we were matched up against the Bulleen team that beat us and I could see the fire in the boys eyes as we had our chance for revenge, and they played the whole game with that fire, ending up winning by about 20 now there was only one opponent left, the Nunawading team. After one of the most intense games I have ever witnessed and a whole lot of heart from our Camberwell boys, we ended up losing the game by 5 points but the scoreboard didn't reveal just how hard the boys played. I was so impressed by everyone across the whole tournament and it was a great experience for us to learn about ourselves and our team. Harry Monaghan ended up walking away with a very deserved best on in a losing effort in the championship game and I know that this tough defeat will only fuel us to work harder come the regular season. (Jacob – Coach)

#### 12.5 #2

The BU12.5 team came into the tournament with some success, following a positive showing in the grading games and a level of excitement going into their first tournament with all players new to representative basketball. Our coach was also excited to see what our young group could achieve, with momentum and confidence starting to build.

Our first match was against Bulleen BU12.4, a team we beat comfortably in the warm-up games. We started off slow early and didn't make the most of our opportunities, then came back into the game, which was an arm wrestle until the last min of the 2ndhalf, finishing on the wrong side of the ledger 43-37.

We played Nunawading B12.5 in the second game, which was another close encounter, with our boys closing out the game for a 36-33 win.

We faced Hawthorn BU12.4 in the next match with a steal in our eyes. Our defensive intensity was up significantly following our initial 2 games, like a pack of Piranhas with blood in the water. This uplift in pressure could have been because of a couple of school mates playing for the other side, with a point to prove! Our defensive efforts in turn providing transition baskets at the other end, which contributed to a solid 50-28 win. Needless to say, the first day back at school would involve bragging rights!

The fourth game of our pool round was against Blackburn BU12.3. We started the same way we finished the previous game, jumping out of the blocks early, building a lead of 15 points at half time, taking the win 37-24.

Our final game before finals was against the top of the ladder team, Nunawading BU12.4. We had already played their 5th side, so we knew this was going to be a tough contest. In saying that, we felt if we played with the intensity that we had shown in the 3rd and 4th games, we were a chance to get the win. The game was close until the end, with the lead changing numerous times. It was a 1 point loss in the end, that had us place 3rd in the group and into the semi-finals on Sunday.

Our semi-final match-up gave us the opportunity we had hoped for, the chance to bring our best and inflict some revenge on a Bulleen team that defeated us in the pool rounds. And that was exactly how the story went. We started the game with the defensive intensity that our opponents found hard to penetrate. We made the most of our opportunities and controlled the tempo, finishing the game on top 44-29. We were GRAND FINAL bound!!!

This was the big one, up against the top team of the pool games and a team we came close to defeating, Nunawading BU12.4.

Both teams started well, but it was clear that the players from both teams were starting to show signs of fatigue. The lead changed hands throughout the game in a battle that was going to produce a close result. As the game drew to a close, the Spectres held their nerve and took their chances to win the game 35-28. Whilst we fell short of being declared the winners, the team has gained valuable experience, strengthened team chemistry and an understanding of what we are capable of if we play at our best. (Daniel – TM)

## 12.6

The boys are all new to rep basketball this season but had made a reasonably strong start in our grading phase 1 winning two games convincingly, one 2 pt loss, and narrowly losing our crossover game.

We started the tournament slowly with a 13 point loss to Coburg where we only had 7 players suiting up for game 1, but 2 getting injured (not handy), which meant we probably needed the 5 fit ones to do too much in that game, which may have flowed into a similar flat 14 point loss to Diamond Valley albeit with 8 players all playing. We were a bit better on Friday night, with coach and players upping their intensity, before eventually losing to Ringwood by 5 points in a game we could easily have won. On Saturday we hit form, beating Broadmeadows by 14 points and then with 90 seconds of the game to go in our game against Altona where we were 3 points down, we caught fire and scored 8 straight points in an utterly brilliant final stanza that saw us qualify for finals - much to the excitement of our families.

In our rematch semi final with Coburg, who were top of the table in the pool matches, we eventually lost by 10, but the score didn't quite account for us leading for most of the first half, and really dictating the terms of the game for a lot of the first 30 minutes. In the second half they got on a bit of a roll, and we didn't look after the ball as well. We did a much better job stopping their main offensive players, but our passing/shot selection let us down. We were probably pressing and trying to score too quickly, and we didn't generate the same quality of shots as in the first half out of all the good work we were doing defensively and on the boards. However, whilst the boys were disappointed not to be heading to a grand final, it was a very valuable experience, there was nothing wrong with our intent and effort after our flat start. Often when we made mistakes, it was often mistakes trying to do the right thing, so it was a

tournament that taught us about what's required. We need to learn to be able to take our time and possess the ball, so we don't have the game get too messy when the opposition gets on a run. We had some great mornings relaxing after our early games at Narrandjeri, the boys bonding over games, trampolines etc, fueling up with fruit, bakers delight etc, the parents drinking coffee, discussing lawn keeping, and there may have been a sneaky mimosa consumed by parents, that will neither be confirmed or denied, in the relentless pursuit of team building. The tournament was a great building block that should help set us up for a great season ahead. (Warren – Coach)

## 12.7

Dragons U12/7 v Eltham U12/8

26/1 11:00am

We only lost by 2 points but with being a first game back for most players and with 2 fill ins we did well to keep it competitive.

Simple turnovers with inbounds passing and bring the ball up gave lots of easy baskets to the opposition. Need to work on inbounds passing and not dribbling into pressure.

Dragons U12/7 v Craigieburn U12/3

26/1 2pm

Lost this game comprehensively to what felt like a div 3-4 team.

We only had 1 fill in to make it a 6 man team against their 8 with at least 3 tallers on their team bigger than our biggest.

Most turnovers were on inbounds pressure and dribbling into pressure bringing the ball down.

When we started passing earlier and confidently the game was much easier.

Much to do on crisp Bball in both off passes and defence.

27/1

Dragons U12/7 v Coburg U12/3

We lost this game by about 10 in the end after actually hitting the lead for a few minutes.

Lots of turnovers from poor passes plus poor transition defence gave the game to other team. Too much standing and watching rather than chasing. Lots to work on but going in the right direction especially taking into account that many of the team haven't touched a ball until this tournament.

28/1

12/7's won our first game today at 3pm against Collingwood. The team started getting their mojo back with better passing and defence adding up to an ok win. Last 5 minutes were nervy as our lead whittled down due to some poor passes but held on for a win.

Our 2nd game at 6pm against Diamond Valley was our best so far. Strangely while our best player had a very unlucky game with 5 fouls the rest of the team played awesomely! Great defensive pressure, good passing decisions lead to easy breaks and some great shots. We hit the foul line a lot and scored well from there. Everyone just clicked in we're so focussed. Best game for the weekend yet. Back tomorrow for an 8am against the no 1 side that we want to seriously challenge.

29/1

Dragons U12/7 v Craigieburn U12/3

After a fantastic game yesterday we went into this morning's 8am game with nothing to lose against a team that beat us by 26 pts on Thursday as per Warren's note. However we had 2 of our bigger players back now and had a few games to improve. We setup with a half court press that put the opposition under great pressure as soon as they got to the half way line. Our Big Ben played a monster game against at least 2 players his size and defended and rebounded his heart out. We passed well in the break and out of pressure using all our teammates to get the ball down quickly and giving great looks for good shots. Constant suns kept up the energy and from a small lead and the beginnings of self belief we ended up on a steamroller by the end of the game with the opposition stunned by awesome Dragons basketball!! So

proud the team. We lost our first 3 games and won the next 3 to get into the grand final at 1pm today.



29/1

Dragons U12/7 v Eltham U12/8 1pm

Unfortunately we lost the grand final making all the mistakes of the earlier teams with constant turnovers on poor inbound and transition passing. We had lost to this team by only 2 pts in the first game and it looks like they bounced back against us like we did against Craigieburn in the semis.

Lots to learn on inbounds passing drills and this will be a constant focus till it is second nature.

A great tournament with examples of excellent and equally poor Bball.

Still proud of what they achieved. Go dragons! 🏀 🏀 🏀 (Dominic – Coach)

## 12.7 (#2)

Going into the tournament we were down a few players due to unavailability, playing the first two games with only 5 regular players plus two fill-ins. Shaking off the summer holiday rust was a priority for the 12.7 boys and the tournament opened with a very competitive game, but ultimately a two point loss to Eltham. Being short-handed then appeared to impact us badly in a very one-sided loss to Craigieburn later that day, but the boys battled hard to stem the bleeding in the second half in a very physical contest. Jasper was the standout player on Thursday, demonstrating skill and poise.

Friday night, the boys came out of the gates hard and were neck and neck with Coburg before Coburg opened up a gap late in the game to deliver our 3rd loss in three games. Josh made a very welcome return to the team with his steadiness and skill at both ends of the floor. Michael also started getting really active hitting the scoreboard with precision shooting which he displayed throughout the remainder of the tournament.

On Saturday, things started to turn our way as we held on for a four point win over Collingwood to keep our tournament alive. Anson's speed and clean finishing at the rim was causing problems for the opposition. We found ourselves with a chance to sneak into a finals spot if we could beat Diamond Valley in the final game and our boys put the foot down and dispatched Diamond Valley with a comfortable 10 point win. Maxi had active hands in defence with some important steals and was making the opposition pay hitting jump shots. We booked ourselves a semi final berth.

Sunday morning, Camberwell (4th) played Craigieburn (1st) who spanked us by 29 points earlier in the tournament, but momentum was on the Dragons side and Ben delivered a massive game, a rebounding juggernaut at both ends of the floor and hitting the scoreboard, causing Craigieburn all sorts of headaches. Liam also played his best game of the tournament with his clever offensive step and lots of support on the boards, the Dragons front line stood up when they were needed. An emphatic 12 point win to the Dragons. The very confident Craigieburn team left the tournament with their tails between their legs. Three wins in a row and we booked our place in the Grand Final against Eltham. However, it seemed the fatigue of playing the tournament without a full squad finally caught up with the boys as we struggled to match Eltham's intensity and we were never really in the contest.

A really satisfying tournament which gave the boys seven hard fought matches to prepare themselves for their return to grading this Friday. Coach Dom and Nem pushed the boys the hard and were really pleased with their efforts all weekend. (Lewis - TM)

## 12.8

Our team (U12/8 boys) is a very new team and established since last term, this is a first tournament game for our boys. The goals for the tournament were:

1. boys should play more as a team not play individually
2. build up confidence and perform reasonably when they are under pressure (both defense and offense)

3. evaluate whether they train at home during holidays ( off season fundamental training, I assigned some basic basketball-related homework for these boys )

Before the tournament, we were lucky to have some of our boys trained together in an extra training session and boys were really excited to be back. In the first match (against MLBC 12/1), we played a good half-game. In the second half, we lost the intensity in both offense and defense side, we only have 7 players as well. In the second game, we just lost by 1 point. Like the first game, we played very well at the beginning, but lost in the end. Our defense attitude were really good, but boys need to be smarter when they play under the pressure; secondly, boys need more communication when they are lack of physical strength and endurance. In the third match, a big challenge occurred. Boys were eager to win and perform, at the same time we had more fouls and turnovers during the game; when our players were shorter and slower than our competitors, boys relied more on the individuals not the teamwork. In the last day of the tournament, we had two really good game. In our fourth game, our boys started thinking of solving problems and communicating with their teammates even when we faced a very strong opponent. In our last game, boys showed some cooperation and determination. We nearly kept up our intensity till the end of the game. All we need was more luck.

Boys were gradually getting better from game 1 to game 5. It is very important for both of me and my players to think of playing smarter and training smarter. This tournament is a good start for us to build up a better team in new year. What was particularly impressive was that all boys showed their determination and wanted to devoted more into their trainings and the following games. As a coach, I also gain more experience and steadfastly keep to the correct path. (Harold Coach)

#### 14.1

The 14-1 boys had a stellar Eltham tournament, being only inches away from a grand final berth in a highly competitive A grade.

We started our campaign with a pair of 50 point wins on Thursday against Whittlesea and Broadmeadows. Our full court pressure and 3pt shooting were highlights.

Friday night saw us face number 1 ranked Eltham, who were undefeated for the entire season 2 years ago in U12s and also haven't lost this season. We traded buckets but ultimately lost by 4 points in a very high quality and rewarding game to coach. We also managed to shoot 3-16 from the FT line, an ironic stat as we went 8/20 from 3.

Saturday morning we came out very sleepy, conceding a 0-9 start to South Adelaide, but picked up the slack from there and rolled through to a 25 point win. We finished our pool games with a convincing 35 point win over Diamond Valley, a pleasing result as we beat them by just 9 in December.

Saturday evening saw us face undefeated Keilor in a cross-pool qualifying final. They were a highly skilled and well-drilled team, and personally I thought the most well put together team we had seen so far. We shot the lights out from the 3pt line the entire second half off the back of some great split-kick-extra principles and managed to snag a 3 point win.

Our final game was our Sunday morning semi final vs Forestville, the number 1 ranked team in South Australia, who had come off the back of a massive upset win against powerhouse Dandenong (a team we expected to roll Forestville). We started slow again, down 0-7, and trailed most of the game, down 7 still with 10 to go. Forestville were extremely impressive defensively. We finally started to attack their weaknesses (there weren't many) better, and clawed to 4 in front with 1 minute to go. A tough Forestville made layup cut our lead to 2, and an interesting out of court call gave Forestville possession with 7 secs to go under our basket.

Well, they dribbled the ball up, mucked around with it for about 6 seconds, then threw it at the rim with a second to go from 2 steps inside half court, and drilled it. Such is life I guess. Boys handled it like true professionals, and I just couldn't help but stand there smiling at the chaos that is junior sport.

Anyway, the weekend was fantastic, the boys are ripper kids and ball players, the parents are relentlessly supportive of me carrying on like a pork chop sometimes, our TM Mel is a godsend, and my AC Rye goes alright too when he isn't somewhere in the country hours away. Cheers sports fans (Conor – Coach)

## 14.2

The U14.2's entered the 2023 Eltham-Dandenong tournament in A reserve and we were looking forward to playing some tough quality basketball at Narrandjeri Stadium in Darebin

With coach Mark Jeffers still away in the USA, we began Game 1 against Eltham 14.2 with Ross Wignell at the helm. After playing some great basketball and leading for most of the game, we lost our nerve in the last 5 minutes to go down by 8 points. Josh Thomas, Zack Tung and Jake Zeunert provided the offensive grunt.

As is most important in tournaments, they bonded further and re-grouped for Game 2 later that afternoon. Game 2 saw us face Nunawading 14.2 and with Conor Mathews helping coach. The boys played some terrific defense that turned to great offense to run out 42 point winners. There were multiple occasions where Nunawading could not get a shot off within the shot clock timing or get through the back court in time. Oscar Buultjens, Jake Z and Zack T put up some great numbers and were ably assisted by everyone in the team getting on the scoreboard.

Game 3 on Friday night saw Ross return to help coach as we faced Collingwood 14.1. The team maintained the tempo from Game 2 and ran out 54 point winners. Once again, the strong defense set the tone for some outstanding offense with Josh T, Gab Tonin, Zack T and Jake Z all in double digits. Special mention to Harry Heathcote for some hard running and fantastic defensive stops.

Game 4 was coached by our parents in Jeri Thomas and assisted by Ric Tonin and saw us face one of the form teams of the pool in Bellarine 14.1's who went into the game with 2 of the top scorers in the tournament. The defensive pressure continued with the team holding the opposition scorers to their lowest tournament score and running out 27 point winners. Oscar B, Gab T provided great offense with special mentions to Elias Harika, Nicholas Rigby and Josh Thomas who played outstanding games in key defensive stopping roles.

Jeri and Ric continued to coach until Coach Jeffers returned at half time in Game 5 where we played Altona 14.1's who were down their best players through to injury. Despite a slow start, we emerged 48 point winners. The all round scoring continued with Josh T, Gab T, Zack T and Oscar B all in double digits with strong contributions from Andom Rendell and Nicholas Lynch.

Semi-finals beckoned against Eltham 14.2. We trusted our form and confidence was high. Despite enduring some tough officiating and rough Eltham play, the team won by 11 points in a complete team performance on both the defensive and offensive end and a lesson in holding their nerve under some serious opposition pressure.

We played Westgate in the final who were undefeated coming in and full of confidence and a loud support base. In the best game of the tournament, the Dragons prevailed by 2 after going basket for basket at crucial times with strong composed play. We won on a near buzzer beater 3 from Zack T resulting from a crucial sideline save from Andom R and some strong offensive rebounding from Josh T. Once again, nearly every member of the team hit the scoreboard and played some stifling defense holding Westgate to one their lowest scores for the tournament.

Worthy champions after playing some outstanding basketball throughout with Josh T voted the GF MVP and 5 Dragons featuring the Top 10 scorers of the pool.

Our thanks to all the coaches and parents who came together to help make the tournament possible. Go Dragons. (Henrietta - TM)

## 14.3

The CWB14.3s were chomping at the bit to start the Eltham tournament after a long summer and some dominant wins in early grading rounds. Unfortunately, Tyce who was recently injured couldn't play, but despite that as the lowest ranked team in our division (Boys B grade) the team was ready for strong competition, and they got it!

Game 1 against Adelaide South started as we'd hope with the boys jumping out to an 11:0 lead, but from there it was a more even affair with points hard to come by. With less than 10 minutes to go in the match we still had a strong 8 point lead, but that was reduced gradually until we were level at 32 points each with 20 seconds remaining and possession. We didn't get a shot off and the game finished a draw with both teams looking very rusty after weeks off court. There were even scoring contributions across the team with rebounding and defensive intensity needing to be the focus for game 2.

The boys well and truly brushed off the rust in game 2 and convincingly beat Craigieburn 58:24. Our defensive intensity and scoring power both on show in this game, with Luca top scoring with 20, and a much better team effort defensively and on the glass.

Then to game 3 and the biggest challenge the boys have had yet, Ringwood 1. A team that was highly competitive against CWB14.2. For this game we were without both Tyce and Chris with injuries, and for the first 3 quarters the game was fast, furious, intense at both ends of the floor, and close. We kept our noses in front by 5-8 points most of the game with the boys handling the pressure and physicality of Ringwood really well. They kept their heads. And then in the last 10 minutes they switched into another gear. Defensive intensity elevated driving numerous turn overs and easy lay ups. And our offensive efficiency also lifted, with shots connecting from everywhere. Joe a stand out in offence with 13 including 3 3 pointers, Lucas added 9 and Matthew and Noah also had huge impact with their speed and athleticism. The boys victorious 57 to 35 in what coach Stevie McGuinness described as BY FAR their best game to date, and a huge step forward.

As can happen, after an amazing game you often see a less than amazing one. And that was game 4 vs Waverley 2. We won 'ugly', by 1 point. Enough said.

Then game 5 was against Wallan 1 and the boys came to play. Up by 15 at the half, we then brought our fast break game to life and blitzed Wallan 71 to 27. Ethan sliced through the defence for 19 points, and Chris got on the end of numerous breaks for 17 points. Bailey's pressure defence also worth a mention as he forced numerous turnovers resulting in easy lay ups. There was a scary moment towards the end with Bailey hurting his knee but thankfully he would recover in time for tomorrow's finals.

The boys progressed into the finals with 4 wins and a draw, finishing top of the ladder, resulting in a rematch in the semi-final against Ringwood 1. Another tense game and again the boys triumphed behind 12 points from Noah and some strong defence and rebounds from Edward.

So the final was a rematch against South Adelaide who we drew with in the first round. And again it was tight, with only a desperation 3 points from Chris from just inside half way (which went in) separating the teams at the half, for a lead of 20 to 17. From there South Adelaide got on top on the back of multiple turnovers from us and some nice shots that they made. Down by 9 with 5 minutes to go the boys needed to rally and they did, betting back to 3 points down with 1 minute to play. Unfortunately that's where our momentum ended and SA held on for a tight 2 point win (although the app says 4).

The boys and Stevie need to be commended on their effort and how they have gelled together as a team and improved over this weekend. It really does set them up for some strong performances ahead on Friday nights ahead. Congrats boys! (Adrian – TM)

#### 14.4

The 14.4B went into the Eltham Dandenong tournament hoping to recreate their win in the Southern Peninsula Tournament. After going 5-0 in the round robin, they defeated Waverley 3 in a semi final to book a grand final berth. Despite having played against Blackburn 2 three times already in various games. this game was different from the others, where the boys were tested and forced to hold off multiple comeback



attempts. Fortunately, the boys were resilient and came out with a 9-point win in a fast-paced, intense, high-scoring affair. The weekend gave us plenty of chances to improve our defensive pressure and scoring capacity, both of which are dramatically better than they were at the end of last year. Thank you to all the parents, especially to team manager Anthony. Special thanks to my assistant coach Kevin, and a shoutout to all the boys for another successful tournament. (Tom – Coach)

#### 14.6

The 14/6 boys had a successful weekend winning the grand final for our pool. We started off with a tough 17 point loss against Blackburn 3. The boys had a good crack but had plenty of cobwebs to dust off after the summer holidays. We went on to beat DV5 & Hawthorn 5 by 30 each. Our 2 big focus points going in were to play with pace & pressure the ball & the boys executed well. We threw in a full court press for the first time all season at half time against Hawthorn. It worked a treat getting plenty of steals in our front court. We finished 2nd in our pool at 4-1 after close wins over Keilor 6 & Ringwood 4.

In the semi we held on against Keilor 6 by 4. In the grand final we went down early against Ringwood 6 & stayed down 7 with about 15 left in the game. We switched up to play half court defence with the boys responding to the situation with some of the stingiest containment on ball defence & help we've played all season. The boys were able to get some stops & then push the ball in transition to make a run. We went out in front by a few baskets & then showed some good composure to close it out.

I couldn't ask for anything more from the boys who are one of the most coachable & competitively driven U14s teams I've seen. The results from the weekend are a great reward for the way they've gone about it so far this season & I look forward to seeing how much more they improve throughout the rest of the season. I'm proud of every single one of them. A special mention to Owen who epitomises hard work & competing to his absolute potential. He was one of our best all weekend hustling on defence to scrap for every loose ball & steal he could get whilst seeing reward on the other end leading our scoring.

Cheers to all the coaches that came along to help out over the weekend & all coaches, players & parents that showed their support during games. It's been great to see a lot of people out & about supporting teams other than their own. I love what you are all contributing to the culture of the club. Thanks to all the parents in our team for your support. You make my job simple when I can just focus on the easy parts! (David – Coach)

#### 14.6 #2

The 14/6 boys started a little shakily, going 10 points down in the first few minutes of their opening game and never quite closing the gap going down 40-57 in a tough game against Blackburn 3's. But from then on they didn't look back, the teamwork and cohesion we started to see before the break came flooding back, as did the teams confidence leading to a 55-21 win against Diamond Valley 5's and 55-29 against Hawthorn 5's.

A really well balanced pool and some surprising results left the top 4 sides on 2-1 going into the final round robin fixtures and back to back wins against Keilor and Ringwood left the Dragons second in the Pool with a Semi Final against a bug Keilor side who had posed a number of problems in their earlier game.

The Dragons started slow and were behind for most of the first half and most of the second, but a tactical change by Coach Dave running a high pressure defence and some fast possessions put Keilor well and truly on the back foot and a couple of key 3-point shots from the Dragons shooters secured a 31-27 win.

The final against Ringwood set a similar tone with the Dragons slow out of the blocks (there is a theme here), unable to take their chances at one end and giving their opponents multiple looks at the other, but again some key tactical changes by the coach and an enormous amount of pressure from the Dragons turned the tide, great shooting, fast offence and some huge D in the second half brought home a very

satisfying 35-31 win against a very good Ringwood side who I am sure we will come against later in the regular season.

It is absolutely brilliant, and a credit to the boys and the coach, to see how quickly this mainly bottom age team have gelled. The ability to switch up style numerous time throughout a game, deliver on individual assignments and take on instruction is a real strength of this group and it's going to be a real pleasure seeing them continue this growth throughout the season. Congrats to the team and the coaches, a great tournament victory!! Go dragons! (Stephen – TM)

#### 14.7

The U14.7 boys had a fantastic tournament going through undefeated and winning the Grand Final against Nunawading 5. On Thursday we started with wins against Hawthorn 6 (45-32) and Ringwood 6 (38-25) then continued to build momentum on Friday with a 24 point win against Bulleen 5 (53-29) and finished off the round on Saturday with strong wins against Warrandyte 2 (50-28) and Blackburn 4 (66-14). There were some common themes in all our round games where we started well with intense full court defensive pressure and great team transition offense which allowed us to establish early leads in all our games. As the tournament progressed it was pleasing to see improvement in both our spacing and patience in our half-court offence.

In the semi-finals, we came up against Bulleen 5 and again we were able to get out to a good lead at the half. Bulleen fought hard in the second half cutting the lead to 13 but the boys showed good composure towards the end of the game finishing with a 19 point win (48-29). The grand final against Nunawading 5 saw the two undefeated teams playing each other so was expected to be a tight contest. Our boys turned up ready to play and whilst the intensity and effort had been really good throughout the tournament, it went to another level for the GF. They played selfless team basketball bringing each other into the game and used their speed in transition and tight defence to open up another healthy lead by halftime. In the second half, the boys had the balance right of when to attack in transition and when to slow the ball down in our half-court offence. Nunawading had a completely different game style to us playing a 5-out perimeter shooting game (they had some good shooters with 5 3s for the game), which the boys defended well throughout the game except for a couple of late 3s which trimmed the final margin to 15 points (53-38). Overall, an awesome game with strong contributions from every player on the team.

Winning is always nice (actually really nice), however, the improved team chemistry and watching the boys have fun playing basketball were the main takeaways from a great tournament. (Josh – Coach)

#### 14.8

The Under 14 8 boys came into the tournament on a high after the Southern Pen tournament & The grading pools and the crossover. The biggest goal as a team was to have the chemistry of playing with each other again and playing strong defence.

Early in the tournament, the boys had a win against Ringwood 6s in a 4-point tough fought win, then narrowly followed shortly to the Nunawading 5s by 1 on Thursday. On Friday the boys had a tough loss to Hawthorn who just looked at another level of defence and offensive display. The following day on Saturday the boys were too eager to bounce back after the game against Hawthorn, The first matchup on Saturday was against Bulleen where we took the chocolates and scraped over a 5 point. The team was praised by Ian Stacker and Michelle Timms, Michelle " A great team game, the boys worked well as a team " Later that afternoon we had a matchup against Warrandyte 2s and won by 20 points to secure a semi-finals birth. On Sunday we were left to face Nunawading 5s in a revenge game, unfortunately, the boys were outplayed by a very determined Nunawading side.

However, what was impressive we kept most teams in a higher pool than us to 10 points or below excluding the final so the boys should feel very confident leading into this season. (Ai-Dan – Coach)

## 14.9

Our tournament went great even though we didn't make finals. It was a fantastic opportunity to play as a team again. I was very impressed with the boy's work ethic and we had a lot of fun and learned a lot. Big thank you to all the parents especially Ben and Chris for stepping in and coaching and Sharon our amazing team manager. (Harry – Coach)

## 16.1

A very good weekend for the guys, who hit back from a 15-point loss to Kilsyth 1 in our opener to post strong double-digit wins against Eltham 1, Nunawading 2 and highly ranked Frankston 1, and a nine-point win against Altona 1. A bigger, stronger South Adelaide team had too much for us in our final group stage game, and we lost twice to Bulleen 1 - the first time by two points and the second time by 10 in the 16A2 grand final.

It was a great experience for us to test ourselves against three of the top eight teams (Bulleen 4th, Frankston 7th and Eltham 8th) in the VJBL based on the pre-season ranking, and given the strides we've taken since getting together in October, there's a lot for our group to look forward to this season.

Thanks to our team manager Sean for keeping us organised over the weekend, to our parent group for their tremendous support - always much appreciated - to assistant coaches Grant and Jack, and to our guys, who had to put some serious work in over eight high-intensity games. (Andrew – Coach)

## 16.2

After a successful phase 1 of grading, the boys were coming into the new year looking to carry that success over into the Eltham tournament as we gear up for yet again another tough phase of grading. With the teams in our pool for the tournament we had some similar talent and some higher graded teams ahead of us which gave us a fantastic opportunity to play some great quality basketball. Against some tough teams, we started off with a back to back Thursday night securing two wins against Westgate 1 and Diamond Valley 2 beating them by a comfortable double figure margin. Friday night we had Hawthorn 1, they gave us a run with their size but we were able to pull away in the last 6 minutes for a 14 point win.

Going into Saturday we faced Eltham 3 and Keilor 2, just one more win secured us a top two spot in our pool, both Eltham and Keilor being graded higher than us gave us a tough challenge, both being the bigger team we had to play smart and by doing so we were able to maintain our undefeated title going into finals. Sunday morning with a tough 9am finals start we faced off against Westgate again, the entire game was close and we were down for most of the game, with foul trouble looming over us in the second half we fought hard and was able to force overtime but couldn't hold on going down by 3 points. (Jarrod – Coach)

## 16.3

The 16 3s were in B3 for the ED tournament. For the tournament, we had only the goal of getting the holiday rust off and anything more than that was an added bonus. The boys started off with their first match in the morning on Thursday against Diamond Valley 3, despite our 11-0 start we ended up losing by around 8 points to start off the tournament. However we then followed this loss up with a more consistent win over Warrandyte 1 by double digits, a team we drew to in preseason and face this upcoming grading phase. The following day the boys lost their only match by 6 points, against Collingwood 1 who had a few returning players, putting us at 1-2. On Saturday the boys went on to win both their games, with a 6 point win against Nunawading 4, then a win against South Adelaide 2. This was the only loss South Adelaide would take for the whole tournament. Now finishing 3-2 we made finals but lost to Diamond Valley once again by a larger margin but the boys finished with great effort and heart and never gave up. (Liam – Coach)

#### 16.4

The Bu16.4 came into the Eltham tournament with enthusiasm and energy after a long deserved break! Our first game was against Eltham and we lost to two very tough calls to swallow and to turn around from that game and keeping our heads up beating top of the ladder to make semi finals was a huge achievement for us. Boys played with amazing energy throughout the tournament and got around each other when someone did something well. Loosing in the semi final by 4 points in Overtime to a team we lost by 25 the morning before was a huge achievement in its own and I couldn't be more proud of the boys!!

#### 16.5

In a pool of six, the 16.5 boys got off to a strong start with four good wins. The highlight was Saturday morning's game against Bulleen 5 where everything clicked. Defensive effort was brilliant as was offence. Transition passing and strong finishing overwhelmed Bulleen and we ran out winners by 30 points. Game 5 proved more difficult against Eltham 7, a team that had beaten us in grading by 2 points with half a second left on the clock. Despite being in a winning position, our finishing deserted us, rimming out numerous shots resulting in a 4 point loss. We still finished top of our pool which was great. Our semi final was against Eltham 7 who finished fourth courtesy of being beaten by 2 teams we had beaten. Unfortunately, in a case of history repeating itself we lost again by 4 points after being in a winning position late in the game. Hopefully we get another shot at them before the end of the season. Great effort by all the boys and we're all looking forward to the next round of grading. (David – Coach)

#### 16.6

With very little training since our last game together, nearly 2 months ago, would the Boys 16.6s bring the same level of intensity and teamwork to their game as they did last year? This question was answered in the very first game where the boys had a strong win over Hawthorn 4. Throughout the tournament, with 10 strong, fit boys in the squad, the aim was for high intensity in both defence and offence, and very quick transition to reduce the ability for our competition to set up their defensive structures. The boys then went on to have good wins over Kilsyth 5, Warrandyte 2 and Waverley 3. Our last game in the pool, on that hot Saturday afternoon, was against Blackburn 2. It was a tough game but we eventually won with a 3-point margin. At the end of the round robin, the boys were on top without a loss. Going into the finals the focus was again on teamwork, and each individual playing their role in both our defensive setup and offensive setup. Our execution on defence had restricted the scoring ability for our competitors and we knew it was key as we moved to the finals. In the Semi Final we again came up against Warrandyte 2, and managed to win with a score of 46-33. Into the grand final, and players and parents alike all excited. Our opponents in the grand final, Blackburn 2, were again strong and the hardest team we came up against playing the game at a similar level of intensity. It was very close through the first half, with our boys holding a small lead at half time. The second half, however, Blackburn 2 appear to tire a little and with our boys sensing an opportunity to win, lifted their work rate. At the end of the game, the boys were successful 47-27 and had gone the whole tournament without losing a game. Pleasingly, and a proud moment for the coach, a number of our opposition coaches commented on how well the boys played together as a team and that while they played the game hard, they played fair. (Brad – Coach)

#### 16.7

After an intense training session on the previous Sunday focusing heavily on our defence, and with a reduced squad, the U16-7s came into the tournament with no expectations, and only the best intentions. Game 1 on Thursday afternoon against the Wallan 2s started off slowly, with Wallan taking it up to us early and taking a lead. The boys regrouped well though, and were able to quickly take control of the game and eventually overtake their opposition and take an eight point lead into the later part of the game, and then

withstand a bit of a comeback from Wallan to take the win, 38 - 35. Good to see that everyone contributed through this game and stepped up where it counts.

Later on Thursday in game 2 against Keilor 6s though, the boys never really hit their stride. Poor defensive structure and passing against a much taller team saw the team down 8 - 18 at the half, and unfortunately the bad news really only continued from there with Keilor really running away with it and winning 23 - 50 at full time.

Friday night against Ringwood 4s and the boys started in a big funk, with Ringwood piling on 10 quick points before we were able to hit the scoreboard at all after 4 minutes of play. Early foul troubles for one of our bigger players, combined with Ringwood's remarkable shot making put us down 16 - 30 at half time. Unfortunately, to Ringwood's credit, their hot shooting form continued into the second half, and they were able to out muscle us under the basket, dominating rebounds and continuing to pull away with the final result 38 - 60 in their favour.

With nothing to lose on Saturday, we came in with a focus and drive to play the game our way and to our strengths, looking to capitalise on strong structured defence and quick transition play. Westgate 4s came out firing with the first 3 baskets of the game, with our boys always struggling in the first half to get back in the game. We levelled at 8 a piece but they were able to pull away again with their next three baskets unanswered, before a two way tussle had our boys down 16 - 19 at the break. A breakdown in our structure early in the second gave them two more baskets, extending their lead to 7 and forcing us to call a quick time out to steady and refocus. Refocussing is the word, as we traded the next two baskets and then started to really turn the screws, going on a 13 point run to be up 31 to 25 with 8 minutes remaining. Westgate then changed it up and started to slowly grind away our lead, bringing it back to level at 38 each after a long range 3 point hit it's mark. With less than a minute to go we hit the lead and then stole the ball to regain possession, but an unfortunate drop in concentration led to a turn-over and basket at the other end to tie it all up on 40. Their full court pressure on the ball handler drew a foul, sending us to the line, and after converting both shots we just needed to deny the catch on the inbound pass. The pass was difficult and a long shot prayer off target meant we secured the victory, 42 - 40.

The final game against top of the table Coburg 5s was always going to be tough, but we started much more positively in this game. Our strong defensive strategy put early pressures on them, and we were neck and neck with them most of the first half, down 21 - 22 at half time. The second half was again very tight, with scores close up until we were 32 - 35, but a lapse in our play gave them a ten point unanswered run which in the end proved to be the difference, as we were unable to peg back the 13 point lead, to less than 3 points, and ended up going down 53 - 58

A great improvement in our play over the duration in the tournament, and despite losing to Coburg in our last game, they were a much tougher opponent than the narrow loss would suggest, and the parents and coaching staff were very proud of their efforts and resilience in their final game of the tournament. Well played boys! (Cameron – Coach)

## 16.8

The EDJBT was the first tournament the 16.8s had played in, and the first tournament ever for some players. After the Christmas break the boys were pretty rusty in their first game against Ringwood. After leading by 8 with 2 minutes left to play we managed to lose by 5. The boys were much better in their second game against Blackburn and had a win. Friday night we returned to play Bulleen. The boys managed a comfortable win in large thanks to a great game by our bigs in limiting Bulleen's hulkish centre. First up Saturday saw a loss to a strong and disciplined Nunawading team. Despite the loss the boys played well and contested hard. Later that day the boys played Eltham. Some ferocious full court defence gave the team an early 11-0 lead that Eltham never recovered from. Sat evening the tournament website showed that we had finished 5th thereby missing finals. This was despite a superior percentage to the two teams above us, all with the same wins/ losses. After making plans for a relaxing Sunday we received a message

from our team manger whose son, Ed had rechecked the website and discovered we had been elevated to 3rd... Our semi was a rematch against Ringwood. After a tight game the boys managed a 5 point win to take us into the GF. The GF would see us take on the hot favourites Warrandyte, who had won most of their games by around 30 points but we had not played. In the GF our boys took an early 5-0 lead. Unfortunately this was as good as it got with Warrandyte eventually winning by 10 points. As coaches, we simply wanted our boys to spend some time together, build relationships, improve with each game and have bloody good fun! We managed all of these. Well done boys. Your coaches are proud of you all. (Ben and Khec – Coaches)

## 18.2

The 18.2 boys came into the tournament with some good momentum following a successful end to what had been a difficult 2022 grading period. Facing Diamond Valley first up, a team who had beaten us convincingly during grading and they did so once again to start our tournament campaign. This was a huge wake-up call for our team and gave us some real motivation to play at the level we knew we were capable of throughout the rest of the tournament. We narrowly won our following four pool games to finish second on the ladder but still not managing to play to our full potential. Our semi was played against South Adelaide who we managed to scrape past by six points the night before, playing our best basketball to date, we came away with a dominant nineteen-point victory to advance to the Grand Final. It was no surprise we were facing an undefeated Diamond Valley, but we were confident nonetheless. Both teams were playing some extraordinary basketball, easily the best they'd both played all tournament and as such it was tight contest throughout. Unfortunately, we just couldn't get ahead and lost by a mere 8 points. It was extremely disappointing; however, we managed take solace in the fact that we improved immensely and played two unbelievable finals games on the back of some great defensive intensity and consistently fluid, unselfish offence. While the tournament gives us hope for the basketball success that this team can achieve in 2023, the bigger takeaway was the improved comradery and trust between all the boys, on and off the court. (Fraser – Coach)

## 18.4

The boys opened with a hard fought draw against Ringwood 3 before a solid win against Kilsyth 4. On Friday they had a strong team performance in a win against Bulleen 4 before an exciting Saturday involving a 1 point win over Warrandyte 1 with 2 free throws down a point with 1.6 on the clock after good execution and patience and a 2 point win against the undefeated Ringwood 2 with a fantastic offensive and defensive effort in the second half after trailing early  
They then played a tough semi final against Kilsyth 4 on the sunday and unfortunately went down by 10 points in a physical game that they give their all  
Thank you to all the boys for their effort and determination, in every game and to the parents for their support and encouragement over the weekend. (Matthew – Coach)

## 18.4 #2

The Dragons U18-4 Boys team entered the tournament with some good form, having won 3 out of 4 grading games before the holiday break.

The team looked a bit rusty early in the first game falling behind by double figures but bounced back thanks to a late 3 pointer by Lawrence (or was it Yves? 😊) with seconds remaining to draw the game 59 all.

This set the tone for the games ahead with the Dragons winning the next 4 games by tight margins, including a 1 point win after 2 made free throws with only 1 second on the clock.

Luck didn't go our way in the finals and with only 2 on the bench for the tournament the fresher legs of our opponents got the better of us. Congratulations to Kilsyth 4 and Ringwood 2 who made the grand final - teams we expect to see again as the regular season progresses.

Thanks to Matt Fielding for his great coaching and support for the boys. The team looks ready for a successful and enjoyable season. (Ian – Dad)

## 18.6

The Boys U18-6's had a good tournament with the main focus being getting into form ready for grading. We started out with a good 11 point win against Warrandyte 3 but game 2 brought out some issues with our game with a 14 point loss to Collingwood 3. Friday night's game was just as bad losing to Melbourne 7 by 11, Saturday afternoon's game then became crucial to making finals and confidence wasn't high, however having lost to both teams we were to play last year, we went into the games ready to come out swinging. First up was Ringwood 6, last time we played was the final practise match where we lost by about 20, but this time was different, intensity was up and the boys were hungry resulting in an 8 point win. Even though we had qualified for finals already we weren't satisfied with just 2 wins, next came the best game the boys had played as a team, Ringwood 5 had not looked like losing a game all season, and I admittedly had doubts that we could back up the performance considering the heat on the day, but boy I was wrong, the intensity went to another level and Ringwood were shocked, the defence was amazing keeping a guy who has scored 20 a game to just 6, resulting in a very nerve wracking 3 point win. Sadly results did not go our way and we finished 4th and had to play Ringwood 5 again. Although we had beat them the day before the same was not to occur, being down 2-20 after 10 minutes set us up for a 18 point loss. Overall I am very happy with how the boys played and it puts us in a good position to hit grading with confidence. (Ben - Coach)

## 20.1

Game 1 vs Eltham

Our first game for the season as a team. Great start by the boys getting out to an early lead which was maintained throughout the game. The boys worked well together- with the boys fresh from the US tour having some match fitness under their belts. Won by 19.

Game 2 vs Hoop Nation NZ

Second game up against very strong opposition. This team had been selected from the best players after a recent NZ tournament. They were bigger and faster and we struggled to compete. Lost by 42.

Game 3 vs Keilor

Evenly matched teams. Keilor lead until midway into the second half. Our boys worked themselves into the game and it could have gone either way. A tech foul by Camberwell late in the game allowed Keilor to capitalise-making their 4 free throws. Lost by 6

Game 4 vs Kilsyth - went down by 13.

Another evenly matched team - a game that could have gone either way. Unfortunately the boys shots were not dropping and the intensity wavered at times. A disappointing loss but one the boys will learn from.

QF vs Nunawading - lost by 5

The boys came out with more intensity and controlled the game at various points but could not pull away. Another game that could have gone our way.

For what started in great fashion with a first up win, there were a few disappointing results along the way. This tournament has given the boys an insight into what is required to be successful during the grading period and beyond. (Nikki - TM)

## 20/2

Camberwell Dragons B20.2 had a really good start to the tournament, winning the first two games(Hawthorn & Diamond Valley), reasonably comfortably, only to suffer a hard fought loss to Westgate in round 3, by 9 points. We bounced back with good wins over Keilor (10 pts) and Craigieburn (26 pts) to face Westgate again, in the semi final. This time though, the boys were victorious, winning a tough game by just 4 points and sneaking us into the Grand Final where, sadly, we lost to Eltham by that same 4 point margin. Started with two injured players, ended with two (but slightly different). So, a ripper effort from a somewhat diminished squad. They'll be frighteningly good once they are all on the court together. The "stand out" from the tournament, I think, was what a terrific bunch of young blokes they are and how well they meshed on the court, considering their limited court time as a group. Well done Dragons B20.2! (Paul – TM)

## GIRLS

### 12.1

The U12.1 girls had a great tournament, brushing up their skills from a long break of basketball and improving with each game. The girls learnt something every game and tried a few new things that we had never done before such as a new sideline play and a different style of defence. This team listens well and knows how to adapt to the style of game (which makes them so easy and exciting to coach. The scores did not always go our way, but we were always competitive and fought hard till the end. This amazing group of girls really know how to have fun on and off the court! We cannot wait to see wait to get the season started!

Thank you to all the parents, players, families, coaches and our wonderful TM Amanda. You always make these tournaments an amazing experience for everyone. (Prue - Coach)

### 12.2

The 12.2 girls had a great yet challenging tournament. We found ourselves in AR and in our first game just fell short to Kilsyth 2 by 2 points, but were able to bounce back in the second game beating Coburg 1 by 16 points to start our tournament off. Then the next three games included a 10 point loss to Waverley, a great team win by 28 to Westgate 1, and finally a heart wrenching loss to Nunawading 2 by 1. This placed us in 4th in our pool which meant we went into the AR2 finals series. We were able to win the first game comfortably which meant we played Kilsyth 2 in the Grand final later that day, in which we were able to get off to a great start and win that game by 13 points. Overall this tournament for us was to gain confidence and grow together as a team both on and off the court which I believe we had done successfully, and I am certainly looking forward to working with this group for the rest of this season. (Ryleh – Coach)

### 12.3

Playing against all 1s and 2s teams in our pool the girls were excited and up for the challenge. Three great wins against Ringwood, Craigieburn and Eltham and a couple of narrow loses against Melbourne and Diamond Valley saw us finish in second place.

The Semi Final on Sunday was against Eltham 12.2s whom we beat the previous day. They were after redemption and came out hard against us in the 1st half, the girls were a little shocked but still believed they could get back into the contest. Great contributions from every player that stepped on the court and a blocked shot with seconds to go left us 2 points short with Eltham the victors on this occasion.



As each game passed, the individual development of each player and the way they all worked so hard as a team was pleasing to see. A big thank you to Amber (TM) for organising us all and helping make the tournament fun for the players and their families. (Scott – Coach)

## 12.4

The U12-4 girls entered the EDJBT with a healthy mix of nerves and excitement, as for most, it was their first foray into a major tournament. Game one against Coburg 2's, extended those nerves to the parents and supporters, as we battled out to a thrilling draw! (We're confident to get the better of them when we meet again this Friday in our next grading match ;). Games against Broadmeadows 2's and Bulleen 3's saw the girls hard work and hustle rewarded with comfortable wins. However, despite our dominant and fantastic play against the Kilsyth 4's - the ball just didn't seem to drop throughout the game and we lost by 2pts right on the buzzer! Our final round-robin game was against the undefeated Eltham 3's and we gave them everything they could handle – however they edged us out, whilst noting to us that they did not wish to play us again! Their wish wasn't granted as we matched up again with Eltham for the semi-final. Another hotly contested game going right down to the wire... Despite amazing efforts and performance by the Dragon girls, the local wildcats managed to edge by us again in the final moments after penalty foul counts took their toll and we lost by a few points...

I'm extremely proud of the intensity and focus the girls brought into each game, which continued to build and develop throughout each game. A fantastic building block to kick off the next round of grading games and season ahead. More importantly, the girls were able to bond, develop great relationships and had a truck load of fun! Well done girls and I look forward to the season's journey ahead. (Brent – Coach)

## 12.4 #2

Nerves were high, and excitement even higher when the u12-4 girls started the Eltham tournament. The girls quickly found their defensive feet against Coburg in their first game to finish with a draw. The determination to not give up, carried into the next round with a convincing win against Broadmeadows. A late Friday night game against Kilsyth was a nail-biter, with the opposition digging deep to shoot the winning goal at the sound of the buzzer. The girls regrouped and showed team effort against Bulleen, with a great win in round 4. Round 5 was tough, with a tired but determined team playing the first-place team, Eltham. The confidence and skills that increased throughout the tournament were on full display, with Eltham put under pressure constantly. Despite our loss, we placed third and proceeded to the semi-finals, again playing the Eltham team. We played our best basketball of the tournament, with tight defence and passes. A few unlucky errors put Eltham in the lead, and they proved too hard to beat. It was impressive to see the team come together over the tournament. Skills and, importantly, friendships grew. We can't wait to see what they do next! (Anneke – TM)

## 12.6

The U12.6 girls came into the tournament on the back of 3 good wins in the first round of grading followed by a heavy 50-08 defeat against Diamond Valley 12.5s. It was therefore a bit of a concern to see them in the same pool as us for the tournament.

The Dragons 12.6 girls have 6 double bottom age and 3 bottom age players and through the tournament played against older girls.

The first game against Broadmeadows G12.3 saw the Dragons girls play well on offence creating many opportunities, but not converting on many of them. Defensively the girls conceded several weak baskets and the game slipped away losing 27-16.

The second game against Keilor G12.4 saw the Dragons girls tightened up the defence, but were unable to create the number of chances of the first game and lost 23-17.

The third game was against Diamond Valley 12.5s, on average 2 years older than our girls. At this point in the tournament their percentage was 1575%, conceding only 2 points per game. The game saw an incredible defensive display by the Dragons girls with very tight marking and intense aggressive play that resulted in only a 21-3 loss. The 21 points was the fewest DV would score during a game in the tournament-something our girls can be very proud of in a losing effort.

The fourth game against Whittlesea G12.2 was close until the last few minutes when they scored a few late baskets with us losing 23-12.

The final game was against Craigieburn 12.2 and the signs were good early with the Dragons getting up to an 8-4 lead midway through the first half. Again the defence was tight, but a couple of errors let Craigieburn creep out in front and a late fightback by the Dragons girls was not quite enough with us losing 22-20.

Highlights for the tournament included the effort the girls put into their games, improvement in our defensive play over the 5 games, some great individual offensive play and the number of shots we got up. If a quarter of the shots had dropped that hit the ring we would have won 2 or 3 games. Off the court the girls bonded well at the local McDonalds between games. Thanks to the parents for getting them out to Keilor every day. (Mark – Coach)

#### 14.1

The 14/1 girls had a really successful tournament, going in with a fairly tough draw we knew it'd be a good chance to see where we sit amongst the best.

First hit out we played Keilor. The team hit the court as strong as they were at the end of 2022. Great team basketball was played and our defence was a challenge for the Keilor guards.

This continued throughout the tournament, knocking over Melbourne in a close one and Broadmeadows also. Our offense was well executed and I applaud the girls for really trusting the process and sticking together during tense moments in close games. The leadership in this group is incredible and everyone plays a really clear role.

We made it to the final four and faced, Kilsyth, who were the eventual winners of the tournament. This game challenged us in the paint, coming up against a much taller, longer side we just needed to compete harder on the rebounds.

Walking away from the tournament, we're confident that we can compete with the best and have identified areas we need to keep working towards.

Huge effort and lots of takeaways from the weekend. Thanks to the girls for always giving their best and playing a great standard of basketball, to Simon for keeping us organised and to all the parents for their ongoing support. (Cara - Coach)

#### 14.4

The 14.4 girls had a fantastic tournament finishing runners up to a physical Diamond Valley. (5-2 record) All 9 girls who played showed huge improvement both individually and as a team and should be very proud of their efforts. The overall team motto is "FIRE" (Fun, Improve, Respect, Effort) and they ticked each theme off throughout the entire tournament. The goal for the EDJBT was to improve our ball protection, team defence and offensive ball movement/plays. These goals were achieved by having a team of girls who were very coachable, team orientated and importantly, an increasing belief in themselves. A special mention to our team defence with the opposition only averaged 20.8 pts per game (1st in grade) which was a sensational effort. Offensively the girls played so well, often through excellent team work which provided all players with great opportunities to score. It is reasonable to say we would have liked a better shooting percentage (field and foul shooting) but the intent and execution of our offence could not be questioned. Thank you to a great group of parents for all your support too! (Trevor and Jacquie Coaches).

## 14.5

The 14.5 girls had a successful tournament finishing runners up. Having had a slow start to the season, they really came together in the tournament, bonded and played some great basketball. The pool matches included 2 close wins against Nunawading and the grudge match against Camberwell G14.6. We had 2 close losses to both Blackburn and Westgate, as well as a big loss to an oversized Eltham team.

We finished the pool in 3rd place by percentage and managed to edge over Blackburn to make the grand final. Fate stepped in with the undefeated 1st placed Eltham team losing their semi final to Western Port due to their best players being out with covid.

The grand final was a close seesawing game with Western Port winning by 3.

A fantastic effort by the girls! Special thanks to coach Mike and assistant coach Kahlil for all their time and effort! (Pete – TM)

## 14.6

The U14-6 girls had a successful first period of grading however this has brought the challenge of moving up virtually 3 divisions even though all grading results were within half a dozen points. With this brought an expectedly tough grade for the Eltham Tournament

In our first game we came up against Eltham 5 who are graded a pool above us and were bigger and older than our girls. Though we had a good run of play for the first 5-10 minutes they soon got on top and ran away with a big win.

In the second game we played Westgate 2 who are also the pool above. We stepped up our intensity and led all game however let them in late and only held on by one point in a nail-biter. We were on the board. Friday night we had the Battle of BSC against our training partners the 14-5 girls. The 14-5 jumped up with 6 quick points and though we clawed our way back eventually the 14-5 won but 4 points in a low scoring Game with a finals-like pressure and atmosphere

On Saturday we faced Spectres 5 and tried a couple of new things in the first half. Whilst we worked hard at these Spectres jumped out to a 5 point lead. Reverting to our normal play in the second half we completely took over, running away with a 7 point win.

The final game was against Blackburn 2. We started with amazing defensive pressure and led by as much as nine in the first half. They adjusted and with a run of intercepts in the middle of the second half reversed that to a 5 point lead. Still we fought hard and with 8 seconds left and trailing by 1 our best foul shooter was clearly fouled on a layup but with no whistle... From the ensuing inbounds Blackburn scored and won by 3 pts.

Unfortunately other results in the final round left us missing out on finals in a 3 way head to head.

It's a great tournament when one shot makes the difference between 3rd and 5th and two make the difference between 2nd and 5th. The girls worked really hard on their defensive intensity and are starting to become more confident with the team offence. Thanks to TM Kate Hoath and the parents for all their support. (Duncan – Coach)

## 16.1

The Under 16/1 girls, had a great tournament where it proved to them how good they can be when they are switched on and move the ball well to get each other easy shots.

We started off against the two top sides in the competition, with a narrow loss to Nunawading 2 and a very physical match, which resulted in a draw against Altona.

In our next three games we were still a bit patchy, but had more good moments and we were able to get three wins. We played solid defense and were able to push the ball and get some easy transition baskets.

Some highlights of the tournament were how the whole team pressed up the floor and pressured the opposition in many turnovers and how the players put their bodies on the line and took many charges, (well done Stella, 6 for tournament - so many skittles!!).

We made the finals but unfortunately went down to Altona by 7. The team never gave up and were in it right until the end.

Tom and I are very proud of the group and can't wait to see what the season will bring! (Danni – Coach)

## 16.2

The u16.2 girls came into the tournament with a mixed bag of form. The girls were super in our pre-grading practice games against tough teams, but then drew a sneaky tough pool in our opening grading round and took a few lumps, balls that didn't bounce our way breaks etc, but then bounced back authoritatively in our crossover game.

Whilst the girls looked a bit tired, as teenagers can after summer holidays and then an 8.30am Sunday morning practice, there was no sign of that once the games started. We were fierce and competitive all tournament long, strong defensively, and on the boards and just consistently difficult to play against, putting our opponents under pressure and generating mistakes and transition opportunities.

As the tournament went on, we found more offensive rhythm and consistency. We had a close win against a fiesty Coburg in our opening game, drew with Nunawading in game 2, beat Eltham in game 3 all whilst losing versatile forward Jemima Park to a tournament ending ankle injury, and then lost to Bulleen by 3 points in a great standard game on Saturday.

We then rattled off three convincing wins in a row beating Camberwell 3 in our final pool game, and accounting for Coburg in the semi-final to create a derby grand final matchup with the other Camberwell Dragons girls, from which we emerged victorious. It was terrific to see so many other Dragons families and friends come and support girls from both teams, and the ties between the teams run deep with school, domestic, former rep team, footy connections etc. Our teamwork was fabulous throughout the tournament with every player playing major and impactful minutes, and evidenced by every player scoring in the grand final. We got terrific practice against zone, late game, side and end ball execution etc. We spent some lovely time relaxing and enjoying each other's company, whilst the girls were treated to a relentless barrage of basketball wisdom wrapped in dad jokes from a raspy voiced coach determined to pursue on-court excellence ;) (Warren – Coach)

## 16.3

The 16.3 girls came into the tournament on the back of some good performances in the first round of grading and grand final appearance in the Southern Peninsula tournament.

The opening game saw a solid performance and a close win over Eltham. The second game was less solid against a very good Bulleen team which saw the girls fall well short in a loss. Our third game allowed the girls to consolidate their ladder position with a narrow win over Nunawading which saw them hit the midpoint of the pool rounds entrenched in 3rd position.

Saturday games began with a narrow 2 point loss to a lucky Coburg followed by a capitulation against their Camberwell club mates from the 16.2s.

Despite this the girls were able to advance through to the finals in 4th but we were paired with the undefeated Bulleen in the semi-final. The girls were absolutely laser focused in the game and lead Bulleen from start to finish in a massive boilover to eliminate them from the tournament and advance to the Grand Final. It was an all Camberwell affair in the final and the girls tried their best but fell at the final hurdle.

In all it was a fantastic tournament and the girls proved themselves beating the only team that had beaten everyone else in the group. They will take a lot of learning and confidence into the next grading round where they can continue to build on their brilliant team performance. (Rachael – TM)

## 16.4

### Game 1

Won against Diamond Valley (5) 33-29

Understandably a messy game for the first one after Christmas. Slow to get going but our defensive pressure through the middle part of the game was excellent. Good to start the year and the tournament with a win.

### Game 2

Lost to Warrandyte (1) 35 - 33

A better game. Same high level of defensive pressure and a close game with contributions from all players.

### Game 3

Lost to Altona (2) 23-17

An extremely tight game where the opposition hit more free throws down the stretch. Our girls played well but tired towards the end.

### Game 4

Lost to Keilor (4) 37-33

It was a strong and physical game; we were beaten by a better team and the eventual champions. Pleasingly we fought it out to the very last second. Although disappointing to lose it was great preparation for the next round of grading where we have Keilor (4) this Friday night. First time the girls had played against a zone and adapted well.

### Game 5

Won against Ringwood (2) 23-19

A strong even game across all players, a great first half and a composed second half as the opposition made a run towards the end of the game.

We finished equal 4th but missed out on the finals by 0.27%. The tournament provided many positives and some areas to work on. All in all, a successful weekend with 5 challenging games. The tournament provided a chance to get back on the court, blow out some cobwebs, spend some more time together as a team and get ready for the season.

Thank you to Assistant Coach Bernie, TM Jacky, the girls and parents for the commitment and support showed over the weekend. Bring on the regular season, Go Dragons! (Mark – Coach)

## 16.5

We approached the Tournament optimistically. Treating it as an opportunity to dust off the cobwebs from the summer holidays and bond as a team. Our coach, Rob and his daughter, Sienna could not make the Tournament, bringing our team down to 9. But we were lucky enough to have another parent, Martin Pretty step in as coach.

The girls were on fire from Round 1. Each game gave them an opportunity to improve their teamwork, defence, offence, rebounds and transitions. They often started well and lost the lead or had the gap closed to within 1 or 2 points. But the girls responded with composure and came back to win 4 of the 5 games, placing them at the top of the ladder.

We lost Round 3 to a tough, strong and tall opposition who played zone defence. They led by 17 points at half time, but only won by 20. A testament to the girls regrouping and responding with better Defence. Finals Day saw the girls win the semis by 10 points. It was a fast paced physical game complete with mid air crashes. They displayed great transition play, defence and teamwork.

The finals against Ringwood G16.4 had the girls worried. After all, they had beaten us quite convincingly in Round 3 by playing zone defence. But the girls were wiser now. They kept the ball moving and played 1 on 1 more, adjusting their play to overcome the opposition by 11 points. A well deserved win and very happy Dragons! (Angie – TM)

### 18.1

Despite being a little surprised we were in A Grade (we registered as AR) the girls got off to a great start by beating Frankston 1. The next 3 games were pretty tough and although we got off to a great start in a couple of the games we lost the next three to Dandenong 1, Keilor 2 (only by 3 points) and Knox 1. The girls were pleasantly surprised when Rachel arrived straight from LA to coach the next game which was a A2 quarter final against Melbourne 2. We had a convincing win overrunning them by 8 points. This placed us in the A2 Semi final against Sandringham 1. Our girls stayed with them the whole game but got beaten by 14 points in the end. A very successful tournament which will set the team up well for the next grading phase and a shot to make VC. A big thank you to Ryleh and Michael for coaching and filling in for Rachel. (Jackie – TM)

### 18.2

We needed overtime to get it done, but my girls walk away champions after a successful weekend. Mia Demarte (grand final MVP 😊) came up with the clutch steal and basket to force the extra period and we all dug deep from there to get over the line. It was great to see the girls so excited, and just as good to see the parents share in the delight. (Glenn – Coach)

### 18.3

The 18.3 girls had great phase 1 grading results and came into the Eltham tournament feeling confident despite the high level competition they faced. This was an opportunity for the team to prove that they deserved to play in a higher grade and despite missing one of their great “talls” they beat Diamond Valley 3, Coburg 1 and Keilor 3, and lost to Craigieburn 1. Their toughest competition proved to be their sisters in the Dragons 2 team, and after a great game of physical basketball, they lost to them by 13 points. However, that wasn't the end of it as the Dragons 3s made the semi final and faced off against their sisters, again! This time they lost by 20 points, but they showed great determination and never gave up. The team certainly improved their skills over the long weekend and are having so much fun playing together, a combination that should lead to success in grading phase 2.....where they play their sisters again! (Darren – TM)

### 18.4

After a good long summer break the girls were not prepared to meet their first team, Waverley 2, and started their run rather sluggishly. Try as they did, Waverley were just too on (like they hadn't been relaxing on the beach) and this forced quite a number of turnovers from our girls and a low conversion of shots. The next game against Craigieburn 2 was much better and their achievements before the long break were coming more to the fore. Following this they battled Nuna 3 and as they lifted their defensive efforts 10 fold, this converted to better scoring outcomes. In fact the Nuna coaches commented on how our girls actually put the fear of losing to our team. Nuna 3 ended winning by 4 to Craigieburn 2 in the GF. In round 4 they managed to beat Bulleen 4 which was a huge relief and their overall efforts paid off. Yet their winning streak didn't continue for long and they lost to Ringwood 2 who were itching for at least one win as well. Overall, the end result saw the girls regroup as a team and they got back some of their earlier mojo, which should see them ready for Friday's game against Coburg 1.

Good effort girls and a big thank you to our TM Anna E and all the parents for their continued support.  
(Dana and Mia – Coaches)

### 18.5

As is the case with most teams we play against we are always on the shorter side but we more than make up for that with our speed and determination. Unfortunately most of the teams in our group were tall and fast.

We were definitely slow out of the blocks in both our games on Thursday losing to Eltham and Broadmeadows. Based on other results we went into the game against Wallan with confidence and enthusiasm and managed to secure our first win of the tournament. The final game against the undefeated Shooters Academy (ACT) was always going to be a challenge and for the first 10 minutes the girls were playing awesome basketball.....after that we won't talk about.

A key focus is to minimise turnovers as we head into the next grading phase. A big thanks to Kate (TM) for organising us all during the tournament. (Scott - Coach)

### 20.1

The u20.1 girls came into the tournament as the first game together, as grading doesn't commence until Feb 3. A Grade was also going to be challenging, our key focus was to start executing our systems and for the girls and families to get to know one another. We had a great start defeating Sherbrooke and then another two come from behind wins to defeat both Casey and Collingwood on the back of some great defensive intensity and work ethic.

Our fourth game against Bulleen was a great encounter, with 2 points in it at half time and our big standing at 5 11 doing an outstanding job defending their dominating big at 6FT 6, however we dominated the scoring opportunities in second half with 28 shots however couldn't convert making 3 at 10% and Bulleen only having 8 shots but making 6 to win. We finished second after the pool rounds. Our first final again we let Diamond Valley get the jump and worked hard and some great shooting wearing them down and win by 25 points.

Our next encounter was always going to be tough with Hoops Nation (NZ) having 3 New Zealand U20 representative players competing for them on the world stage and another big 6FT 6. Unfortunately whilst we fought hard they got the jump on us and were hot from the 3 point line from the go. It was a great experience for our team and one that will make us a better. Extremely proud of the girls and the all-round contribution from the players and also the effort of the amazing parent support we had also. (Craig – Coach)