



WHEN NETBALL WAS BASKETBALL THE FIRST 50 YEARS OF NETBALL IN MONBULK

Netball has been played in Monbulk for nearly 100 years and the Monbulk Netball Club has been representing the town for most of that time.

The game was known as Basketball until around 1970 when the name was changed to Netball to differentiate itself from men's basketball.

The earliest known reference to basketball (netball) in Monbulk is from a social match played on a Tuesday evening on July 29, 1924. The 'Boogong Girls' (Sassafras) came to Monbulk to play the 'Bluebird Girls'. Monbulk's Bluebirds team consisted of Miss Rene Kay (captain) and Misses Olive Kay (goaler), Laura Godfrey, Hilda Hill, Stella Hill, Mary Hopton and Winnie Bennett.

Until 1930 it appears that there were only social matches played amongst the Hills townships and as a result there were not many reports in the local newspapers.

In 1931 Mr Alphonse Ansaldi of Belgrave offered a trophy for the 'Mountain District Basket Ball Association'. Emerald carried the honours for the first two seasons but it was the last shot of the day

that claimed the cup for Monbulk in 1933 in a 20 to 19 victory. Monbulk won again in the following year before Emerald and Belgrave (B) took out the 1935 and 1936 cups respectively. Monbulk then won a hat trick from 1937-1939 before the outbreak of World War Two caused the competition to cease. The Monbulk Netball Club still proudly displays the Ansaldi Cup in their clubrooms which they had claimed on five occasions.



For a few years after the war, basketball was played as a non-competition sport. It wasn't until August 1949 that steps were taken to form a Girls' Basketball Competition within the Ferntree Gully Shire. Within weeks Upwey, Belgrave-Tecoma, Upper Gully State School, St John's, Upwey District Youth Assn., Monbulk Girls Athletic Club, Boronia-Gully, Boronia Church of Christ, Belgrave Postals and Emerald formed the initial 10 team association. The

first season was played as a summer competition and started competition on October 15 with St. John's winning the inaugural premiership in March of 1950. The winter competition started up shortly after in May 1950 with 12 teams, including Monbulk, taking part. Emerald reversed the summer result by defeating St John's in the Grand Final. Monbulk had finished 2nd last in the summer competition but had improved to be equal 5th in the winter game.

Most of the teams played at local state school or church grounds. The Monbulk team was formed by Laura Simpson with an enthusiastic group of young players. Laura won the 'Chandler Trophy' as competition Best & Fairest for 1950 and



Monbulk Basketball Team 1937. Dalcie Seamer, Norma Camm, Coral Seamer, Gladys Seamer, Merle Hurry, Ella Dixon & Vonnie Matheson.

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also represented the Association in Adelaide in 1951. She was also President of the Mountain District Girls' Basketball Association (MDGBA) at this time.

The Monbulk court was located in the State (Primary) School grounds and besides being a gravel court it had various obstacles such as a gutter that ran through the middle of the court and an overhanging oak in which the ball would often get caught. On the morning of the match the lines would be marked out with lime, which would wash away if it rained. The netball posts had a pyramid wooden base stand which would often trip up players.

With a growing popularity in the game, B Grade was introduced in 1951 as the competition grew to 20 teams. Monbulk finished 2nd last in 1951 and struggled to field a team in 1952 but eventually entered a side in B Grade. They remained in B Grade until winning the 1957 premiership which had them promoted back to A Grade. Travelling to the grounds was either with Laura Simpson in her Aunt Kit's Bradford utility and later by bus and train or in Peter Lane's taxi.

The netballers went from strength to strength on returning to A Grade. As interest grew and more players joined up, the club fielded sides in every division with premierships and Best & Fairests being won in all grades. Being led by Jan Moore (later Simpson) they went on to claim five consecutive A Grade pennants from 1959 to 1963 and just for good measure repeated the dose with another five A Grade titles from 1967 to 1971.

Depending on the uniform chosen each season, the girls would either make their own dresses or wear a maroon school tunic with a gold tasselled cord around their waist. The maroon skirts and gold tee shirts were introduced as the club uniform in the late 1970s.

In the mid 1950s the club moved to a new court at the football ground. The court had a sandy surface and was located where the entrance to the football ground, off Moores Road, is now located. The netball games remained there until the 1960s when their current location was chosen. Doug Moore was a member of Monbulk Recreation Committee and very instrumental in getting the first 2 courts leveled and sealed.

Monbulk Girls' Basketball Club "A" GRADE PREMIERS 1960



Monbulk A Grade premiers 1960. Jan Moore (Capt), Beryl Sands, L. Parkhurst, Dianne Moore, Sandra Moore, Pat Rich, Maureen Anderson and A. Gray.

Doug was also a delegate, umpire and coach for Monbulk for several years.

Around 1972, the Silvan to Cardinia Reservoir pipeline was being laid so excavated earth was placed beside the football oval to create the present road around the McAllister Road side of the oval. The old netball court was then removed to form part of the access to Moores Road.



MONBULK GIRLS ARE TOO MUCH!

Monbulk Netball premiers 1971. Captain Jan Simpson, Marianne Kuyper, Nan Van Seters, Dianne Johnstone, Sandra Donnelly, Margot Capuano, Sandra Davidson. Other members not pictured are Judy Maxwell and Miriam Van Haaster.

Thank you to Jan Simpson for her memories and photos.