

Belnorth FC Secretary's AGM 2023 Report

Registrations

2023 was another big year for Belnorth FC, with over 1,300 winter registrations and 127 teams. Not to be outdone, the October 2023 edition of Henk's Summer Comp has also been massive, with our junior comp requiring a fourth timeslot and our senior comp using up all the available fields at Kaleen.

Mini-Roos Jersey Refresh and Sponsorship

At the start of the year, we teamed up with KonQa to fit out all our U5-U9 teams with fresh new jerseys. Everyone seemed to like the dazzling new threads running around Kaleen and beyond.

Our new partnership with KonQa gave us the impetus to offset the large expense of jerseys by restarting jersey signage for generous sponsors. This brought in over \$16,000 in sponsorship for the 2023 season.

Thank you to all our sponsors for their generosity: Shaw Building Group, Graeme Cabinetworks, ECG Electrical, Capital Trophies & Sportswear, New Step Podiatry, ADA Civil, Designer Drafting, Compass Healthcare and Dominos.

The work has already been started securing old and new sponsors for 2024. We hope to set up sponsorship opportunities outside Jersey signage to welcome businesses of all shapes and sizes. If you are a business or know a business that would like to sponsor Belnorth in one way or another, email sponsor@belnorth.org for more details.

New Equipment: U5-U7 Goals and Goal Post Pads

A large investment this season was aluminium folding goals for our U5-U7 goals that were in desperate need of replacement. Though there was a learning curve with opening and closing, these rock-solid goals will hold the club in good stead for many years to come—special thanks to Graeme Farrugia, who did the lion's share of putting together all 48 goals.

Another investment in game day equipment was new goal post pads. The old pads were due for retirement, and these new ones ensure safety around goalposts during small-sided games whilst making sure opposing teams know they are playing against Belnorth.

Looking toward 2024, we hope to refurbish the small-sided goals for our U8 to U13 cohort, primarily around the locking mechanisms, but also some potential riveting.

Club Shop and Merchandise

2023 marks a significant change for the club in the distribution and sale of shorts, socks and other merchandise. Previously, we were lucky that Rebel sold our gear out of their Belconnen store, but unfortunately, that arrangement has ceased due to a Rebel head office decision.

This change necessitated that the club's volunteers now needed to sell these items to members. Enter our partnership with KonQa. During the preseason, we organised custom socks, unisex shorts and womens shorts, along with off-field apparel such as beanies, caps and polos.

A Square terminal was purchased, barcodes created and inventory entered to ensure our Club Shop was ready for the expected demand in preseason, and oh boy, there was quite the demand! Despite utilising Rebel sales data from previous years, the smaller-sized shorts and socks sold quite quickly, necessitating a top-up order.

As winter approached, we organised hoodies and tracksuits to sell via the KonQa online store as we wound down our Club Shop opening hours.

Looking forward to the 2024 season, top-up orders have been organised and will be ready for the preseason. We will also sell tracksuits and hoodies from the Club Shop, which a lot of members will appreciate, as opposed to ordering online. We also hope to stock shin pads for next season.

If there are any products you think we need to stock, please let us know.

Australia Cup

Glenn and the State League Men Division One squad outdid themselves again with a fine showing in the Australia Cup, reaching the fifth preliminary round, the club's furthest progression.

After thumping Woden Valley 7-1 in the third preliminary round, and beating Weston Molonglo 3-0 in the fourth prelim, they succumbed to Belconnen United 2-5 in the fifth round.

Well done, State League Men!

Kanga Cup

We had 13 teams represent Belnorth FC (see below) at the 2023 Kanga Cup, enjoying the experience of tournament football against teams from outside Capital Football's catchment.

- U9 Open All Stars
- U9 Open Mariners
- U9 Open Sky Blues

- U9 Open Strikers
- U9 Open United
- U9 Open Western
- U10 Female Flyers
- U10 Open Fuchsia Flamingos
- U10 Open Lamborghinis
- U10 Open Red Devils
- U11 Female Wildcats
- U12 Open Boomerangs
- U12 Open Sharks

Finals, Premiers and Champions

We had another year of silverware during the winter competition for our competitive and senior teams.

Both the State League Women Division 3 Belles and the U18/2 Open Lions ended up as premiers and champions in the competition after topping their divisions and winning their finals.

Well done, Paul and the Belles, along with Nick and the Lions!

Teams that made the semi-finals but failed to progress were the U16/2 Open Eagles, the U18/3 Open team, two Community League mens teams (CLM1 Bisons and CLM3 Strikers) and the Over 55 masters team, the Golden Years.

Presentation Days

After having difficulty securing a venue that could accommodate all our juniors at one time, we decided to split our junior presentation into two, along with our senior presentation, meaning three presentation events in 2023. U5-U12 at Kaleen High School, U13-U18 at the Clubhouse Kaleen and Seniors at the Clubhouse Kaleen.

Thank you to the volunteers who assisted at our junior and senior presentations: Rachel Salloum, Meg Holt, Holly Cockburn, Gerry, Molly & Daisy McInally, Darren & Jacinta Houlihan, Brendon & Jarod Lewthwaite, Liam Knight, Helena Clayton, Annie Stewart, Meg Holesgrove, Haidee & Harper Hudson, Jess Simpkins, Ben & Ruby Williams, Sean, Dea & Aidan MQueenie, Danielle Lirette, Nina Haystack, Mel Lloyd, Claire Larkin, Jess Levi, Kelly Baseler, Leah Jones, Sharon Babyack, Tom Culley and Jay Nair.

You all made our presentations a success!

Club Awards

At our presentation events there were a lot of trophies and medals handed out. We'd like to congratulate the Club Award recipients below.

Juniors:

- Peter Desmond Junior Female Player of the Year: Sofia De Oliveira Cruzado
- Peter Desmond Junior Male Player of the Year: Samuel Whittle
- Miniroos Coaches of the Year: Candice Couper & Leon Gold
- Junior League Coach of the Year: Neil Davill
- Matthew Starke Memorial Award: Christian Macoun
- Junior Club Person of the Year: Xavier Taylor
- Sue O'Dwyer Memorial Award: U8 Platypuses
- Henk's Golden Whistle - Game Leader of the Year: Abby Richards
- Henk's Golden Whistle - Referee of the Year: Xavier Taylor
- 10-Year Awards: Connor Holly, Elisa Walker & Matthew McCreath

Seniors:

- Senior Women's Player of the Year: Carlia Foy
- Senior Men's Player of the Year: Simon Keegel
- Senior Coach of the Year: Paul Levi
- Matthew Starke Memorial Award: Hailey Ward
- Senior Club Person of the Year: Ben Muir
- Sue O'Dwyer Memorial Award: SLW4 Birdies
- Women's Golden Boot: Mel Lloyd
- Men's Golden Boot: Joshua Argenti
- 10-Year Awards: Leah Jones & Haylee Edwards
- Life Membership: Ben Muir

Hardship Scholarship

While on the subject of presentation days, we held two Hardship Scholarship Fund raffles before and during the presentations, one for juniors and one for seniors. Belnorth members showed their generosity in spades by raising \$4,000 in total.

Thank you to all who bought tickets for this great cause.

Game Leaders and Referees

We had a bumper year for our junior referees. It is best described by Matthew Willington, our invaluable Referee Coordinator, in his 2023 report. However, it would be remiss of us not to thank him for his great work with the game leaders and referees. We also thank all our game leaders and referees for their dedication during the 2023 season. You are all vital to our club.

Club Changer 1-Star Status Achieved

On the 20th of September, Belnorth FC achieved 1 Star Club Changer status, demonstrating commitment and dedication to the development of Women and Girls Football. This entitles Belnorth to access resources, services and potential funding for Women and Girls.

Special gratitude to Kat Newman, who put in the work to make this happen. Kat has long been an advocate and champion for Girls and Women's Football.

Thank you, Kat!

With 1 Star under our belt, we will seek to achieve the 2 Star status. To achieve the second star, the important area of Safeguarding will be one of the priorities for the club's development plan, along with three other areas.

Volunteers

With 127 teams, that means an army of volunteers to coach and manage individual teams, ensuring happy, smiling faces on game day and at training, along with those who volunteer as Club Vested Officials and fill-in referees/assistant referees at games.

Thank you to all the volunteers who put their hand up to coach, manage, run the line or put on the CVO vest in 2023. Teams would not function as they do without you.

Committee

Another year, another struggle to fill committee roles, with the club currently lacking a President, Vice President and Small-Sided Games Registrar, along with the Treasurer being in caretaker mode. 2023 has been tough.

This dearth of personnel puts much pressure on those who put their hand up for these often invisible positions. The committee perform the behind-the-scenes tasks required for the club to function. Hopefully, additional committee members step forward.

Thank you to my fellow committee members for your contributions in 2023.

Finances

Despite a substantial outlay on jerseys, mini-goals and merchandise stock this season, the club has a modest surplus of just over \$7,000. Sponsorship and a bumper Summer Comp would be two reasons to explain this.

The above surplus doesn't consider potential sales of current merchandise, not including top-up orders for 2024. There is over \$50,000 worth of sales from current stock. This puts Belnorth FC in a good position financially.

Looking at potential expenses for 2024, investment in technical development and programs would be one area. Another would be fitting out club storage areas to make better functional use of those spaces.

Pathways

In 2023, constructive discussions were held with Belconnen United about player pathways. With the advent of the Capital Premier League in boys over the last few years and the fierce pursuit of ever-younger development squads for boys and girls across NPL/CPL clubs, BUFC was keen to talk to all the Belconnen junior clubs.

Having said that, Belconnen United seem to function as two units from a technical point of view. A Girls/Womens and Boys/Mens arm. Although both want to establish ever younger development squads, the two silos have different views on their relationship with Belnorth, Belsouth and Belwest.

An example is the Blue Academy, with the girls' side welcoming Belconnen community players, whereas the boys' academy is looking to be more exclusive. Like any primarily volunteer-driven organisation, resources are at a premium, especially for areas where technically knowledgeable individuals are required to run sessions. Still, it is concerning.

Hopefully, a middle ground can be found with BUFC, with some benefits trickling down to the junior Belconnen clubs outside of MiniRoos cameos at NPL/CPL games.

2024 and Beyond

What is in store for 2024 that hasn't already been mentioned?

A Belnorth Constitution rewrite is well overdue, with the current version dated 2011. Many Belnorth committees over the years have had it on their radar, but oftentimes, it falls by the wayside due to other pressing issues.

Having said that, it is an opportune time to tackle this task with new model rules for incorporated associations coming into effect in February 2024. I suspect a rewrite will be modest. Modernising the Constitution rather than looking at wholesale structural changes to

the club or the committee. Getting Belnorth FC back on the horse of regular constitution updates with a view to more meaningful changes in the future should be the goal.

2023 was a lacklustre year for technical programs at Belnorth FC, owing to the difficulty in attracting suitably qualified individuals to deliver technical programs and the club's focus on establishing its club shop and other tasks in preparation for the season.

Work is already underway for 2024, with plans for preseason and in-season technical development programs.

Overall, Belnorth's future looks bright on many fronts, especially post the Womens World Cup, with an expected bump in player interest, young and old.