



The Stirling Amateur Football Club was established in 1998 following a merger between the Osborne Park Football Club (competing in the Sunday Football League) and the Balcatta Amateur Football Club (competing in the WA Amateur Football League).

Osborne Park initially wanted to join the WAAFL as a stand-alone club, but would have been forced to start in lowly D-Grade (as was the requirement for any new club), while Balcatta wanted to upgrade their existing facilities at Jones Paskin Reserve in anticipation of playing A-Grade football in the near future. As a result, a merge of the two clubs into one super club, operating from Osborne Park's home ground at Richard Guelfi Reserve, was seen as the best solution for the future of football in the district. The new Club is known as the Balcatta-Osborne Park Amateur Football Club.

## 1998

The Club joins the West Australian Amateur Football League (WAAFL) and commences regular competition with four senior teams and one colts team. The new Club does not have to wait long for success, winning a coveted premiership double in league and reserves. The League team, coached by Kevin Caton, defeats Hamersley-Carine by 42 points - the final scores being Balcatta-Osborne Park 15.10 (100) to Hamersley-Carine 8.10 (58). The Reserves team, coached by Joe Wallam, defeats Bassendean by 72 points - the final scores being Balcatta-Osborne Park 16.9 (105) to Bassendean 5.3 (33). Patrick Erdelyi wins the E-Grade Fairest & Best Medal.

## 1999

The Club is promoted to A-Grade and appoints former Melbourne and West Perth player Darren O'Brien as League coach. The Club finishes its first season in A-Grade in 7th position, with 7 wins and 11 losses. Due to a decrease in the number of younger players, the Club is unable to field a Colts team.

## 2000

The League team finish the season in 9th position. There is a re-introduction of a Colts team and the Thirds team moves from E-Grade to F-Grade. The Fourths team (previously competing in E-Reserves) is also discontinued.

## 2001

The appointment of ex-West Perth and Peel player Trevor Green as playing coach brings immediate success to the Club. The Club reaches the finals in A-Grade for the first time and defeats Nollamara by 4 points in the Elimination Final, before losing the North Fremantle in the First Semi Final by 38 points. Matt Cullen wins the A-Grade Leading Goal Kicker award with 86 majors for the season. The Thirds reach the finals in F-Grade and advance to the Preliminary Final, but are knocked out by eventual premiers Marangaroo. The Colts, coached by Anthony Peou, also reach the finals for the first time but lose the Elimination Final to University.

## 2002

Although the Balcatta-Osborne Park name served the Club well in the early years, it is decided to change name to the Stirling Amateur Football Club to encompass the entire district that the two clubs originally came from. The League team moves one step closer than the previous year, finishing the season in 2nd place on the A-Grade ladder. In the finals, the Club loses to Fremantle CBC by 5 points in the Qualifying Final, defeats Trinity-Aquinas by 16 points in the First Semi Final and finally loses to North Beach by 17 points in the Preliminary Final. Matt Cullen wins his second successive A-Grade Leading Goal Kicker award with 46 goals for the season. The Thirds, coached by Russell Taylor, also improve on the previous season by reaching the Grand Final in F-Grade. In a hard fought battle, the Club defeats Swan Athletic by 6 points in the Grand Final to claim its first Thirds premiership - the final scores being Stirling 6.9 (45) to Swan Athletic 5.9 (39).

## 2003

The League team finishes the season in 5th position and defeats Collegians by 10 points in the Elimination Final. However, for the second time in 3 years, the Club is defeated by North Fremantle in the First Semi Final. The Thirds prove that 2002 was no fluke by winning their second successive F-Grade premiership, defeating Mt Lawley by 57 points - the final scores being Stirling 12.12 (84) to Mt Lawley 4.3 (27). The Thirds are coached by Jeff De Cinque, who becomes the third family member to coach a premiership - father Lou coached the Osborne Park Reserves to flags in 1982 and 1983, while brother Domenic coached the Osborne Park Thirds to a premiership in 1991.

## 2004

The club appoints Andrew Rottigni to coach the League side, but it was always going to be a difficult task, having lost 12 of the previous season's starting line-up including a wealth of experience. The Club finishes the season in 10th position (wooden spoon) with only 2 wins and 16 losses, however six of those losses were by 15 points or less. Despite the low position on the ladder, Jarod Hayman wins the A-Grade Leading Goal Kicker award with 64 goals for the season. The Thirds reach the finals but are knocked out in straight sets by Swan Athletic (in the Qualifying Final) and Hamersley-Carine (in the First Semi Final). The massive loss of player numbers means the Club is unable to field a Colts team for the year.



## 2005

After being relegated to B-Grade, former Claremont and East Perth player Chris Gerreyn is appointed as coach of the League team. After a slow start, the Club wins 7 consecutive games to finish the season in 3rd position. The Club narrowly loses the Qualifying Final to Wembley by 7 points, but recovers to defeat Mt Lawley by 23 points in the First Semi Final. In the Preliminary Final, the Club goes down to eventual premiers Wembley by 42 points. Rhys Croxford wins the B-Grade Fairest and Best Medal. There is a re-introduction of a Colts team.

## 2006

A slow start to the season sees the club in 8th position on the ladder at the half way mark of the season. However, the Club goes on to win 9 of their last 10 games to finish the season in 3rd position. Wins in the Qualifying Final vs CBC (by 7 points) and the 2nd Semi Final vs Hamersley-Carine (by 36 points) sees the club advance to its first league Grand Final since 1998, therefore gaining automatic promotion to A-Grade for the 2007 season. Unfortunately the Club is defeated in the Grand Final rematch vs Hamersley Carine by 13 points - the final scores being Hamersley-Carine 11.14 (80) to Stirling 9.13 (67). For the second time in the Club's short history, the Colts team, coached by John Batten, also reach the finals but are defeated in the Elimination Final by Willetton. Due to a decrease in player numbers, the Club is unable to field a Thirds team for this season.

## 2007

Another slow start to the season saw the Club dwell in the lower half of the ladder for the first half of the season. However, the Club wins 7 of the last 8 games of the season to finish in 4th position. Unfortunately, the Club is defeated in the first week of the finals, going down to North Fremantle by 19 points - the final scores being North Fremantle 11.11.77 to Stirling 8.10.58. An increase in player numbers allowed the re-introduction of a Thirds team in 2007, competing in F-Grade.

## 2008

Former Fremantle, Western Bulldogs and Hawthorn star, Kingsley Hunter, is appointed as League coach for 2008. The Club fails to play to its potential and finishes the season in 7th position, missing out on the finals by a game and percentage. For the first time since 2000, none of the Club's sides make the finals. However, the silver lining to the season is the resurgence of the Thirds team, in particular that of Troy Mellidis, who ties with two other players to win the WAAFL F-Grade Fairest and Best Medal.

## 2009

Another slow start to the season sees the Saints with only 3 wins from the first 7 games, before a gutsy victory versus reigning premiers North Beach at Charles Riley Reserve sees the start of a push towards the finals. The Saints win 7 of the last 11 games to finish 5th on the Ladder. After losing twice to Fremantle CBC during the regular season, the Club scores an upset 15-point victory in the Elimination Final. However, for the second time in three years the Club is eliminated by North Fremantle in the First Semi Final. The standout victory for the year was an amazing comeback versus Collegians in Round 16. After trailing by 29 points at quarter time, 28 points at half time and 27 points at three quarter time, the Saints kicked 7 goals in the last quarter to snatch an amazing victory by 2 points. Joel Edwards became the first player to win three Club Fairest & Best trophies, adding to previous wins in 2001 and 2007.

## 2010

A loss of senior players from the previous year sees the Saints struggle, winning only two games for the season. The two victories against 2nd Placed Trinity-Aquinas and 3rd Placed Whitford is not enough to avoid the wooden spoon and relegation to B-Grade. The positive to come out of the season was the form of the Thirds team that finished the season in 5th place. After a thrilling upset victory against Scarborough in the Elimination Final by 5 points, the club is eliminated by eventual premiers Ocean Ridge in the First Semi Final.

## 2011

In a similar manner to previous years, the first year back in B-Grade looks set for disaster with only 2 wins from the first 8 rounds. However, 6 wins from the last 8 rounds sees the Club finish the season in 4th position. The Club defeats Willetton by 16 points in the Elimination Final, and follows up with a courageous 9-point victory over Kalamunda in the 1st Semi Final to extend the winning streak to seven games. However, the Club is not strong enough to gain promotion back to A-Grade, going down to Swan Athletic in the Preliminary Final by 48 points. Joel Edwards finished runner-up in the WAAFL B-Grade Fairest and Best Medal, as voted by the umpires. The Thirds also perform strongly by winning their last game of the season against eventual premiers Bullcreek-Leeming to finish in 5th position. However, they go down to Fremantle CBC in the Elimination Final by 25 points.

## 2012

The Saints started the season in flying fashion, winning the first three games of the season for the first time since 1998. However, in one of the worst run of injuries in recent history, the Club struggles with up to nine of the first XVIII team spending length periods on the sidelines. The Saints win only six games for the season to finish in 8th position, narrowly avoiding relegation to C-Grade. Frank Rossi reinforces his status as one of the Club's greatest players, taking out his third Fairest & Best, while coach Kingsley Hunter steps down as League Coach at the end of the season, after five years at the helm.



## 2013

The Club appoints Tony Ricciardello as the new League coach and, in doing so, he becomes the first person in Club history to coach the Colts, Reserves and League sides. Unfortunately, however, the Club struggles with little on-field success, taking until Round 13 to register the first win of the season. The club finishes the season with just two wins, and is relegated to C1-Grade. On the positive side, 13 players made their League debut for the Club during the season, and newly appointed Club captain, Damien Lloyd, capped off a stellar season by winning the League's fairest and best award.

## 2014

The Club appoints one of its favourite sons, Joel Edwards, as coach of the League side. Despite a shaky start, the Saints win 15 out of 18 qualifying games to finish in 2nd place on the ladder. The highlight is the Round 15 game in which the Saints set a new club record highest score and winning margin versus Melville - the final scores being 33.14 (212) to 2.4 (16). The Club wins the Qualifying and 2nd Semi Finals, but falls well short in the Grand Final, going down to Kingsway by 71 points. Despite the disappointing result, the Club is promoted back to B-Grade. Adam Edwards wins the WAAFL C1-Grade Fairest & Best Medal.

## 2015

The Saints start the season in promising form, defeating eventual Grand Finalist, Scarborough in Round 1. However, the Club only wins two more games - both against Maddington - to finish the season in 9th position and is relegated once again to C1-Grade. The Club loses four games by less than 10 points, which could have made a significant difference in their final position. In an amazing solo performance, Aaron Sweet wins the WAAFL B-Grade Fairest & Best Medal, despite the Saints winning only three games during the year. Due to a decrease in the number of younger players, the Club is unable to field a Colts team.

## 2016

The Club appoints Victorian-born Tony Mirabella as playing coach of the Club's League side. The Saints finish the season in 2nd place on the ladder, with 13 wins and 5 losses. Despite losing the Qualifying Final to Kingsley, the Saints win the 1st Semi Final against Carlisle, and then come back in dramatic fashion to win the Preliminary Final by 2 points against Kingsley to advance to the Grand Final and earn promotion back to B-Grade. In the Grand Final against Maddington Bulls, the Saints work themselves back from a 28-point half time deficit, but fall just short by 6 points by the final siren - the final scores being 11.5 (71) to 11.11 (77).

## 2017

The Club experiences one of its worst seasons in terms of player injuries. With just four wins for the season, the Club finishes in 9th position, and for the third time in five years, is relegated back to C1-Grade. The silver lining for the season is the resurrection of a Colts side for the first time since 2014. The run of injuries also provides opportunities for young players, with up to 22 players making their League Debut in Saints colours.

## 2018

Kingsley Hunter returns to the Club as the League coach and the season starts well with three wins from the first three rounds. However, the Club does not win another game and finish the season in bottom place, resulting in relegation down to C2-Grade. Adam Edwards became the first Stirling player to win four Club Fairest & Best trophies, adding to previous wins in 2008, 2011 and 2014.

## 2019

After a good start to the season, the Saints fell away badly during the middle and back half of the season. The Club finishes as wooden spooners with just three wins for the season, and is relegated again to C3-Grade. Club Captain Michael Franceschini becomes just the seventh player in club history to play 300 games, which is achieved on the final game of the season. The Club's Reserves also experience a resurgence in the second half of the season, after breaking a 25-game losing streak in Round 7. The Reserves win 5 of their last 7 games, including wins against top five opponents.

## 2020

The 2020 season started on a positive note with the appointment of Life Member and Club legend, Justin Kickett, as League coach. However, the start of the season was deferred due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and was later shortened to just 9 rounds. The Club welcomed 17 new League players and despite their consistent efforts, the Saints did not register a victory in the League and Reserves sides.