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In this week's edition, the First Grade take home the Grand Final trophy in an epic battle against Roosters FC!!

The First Grade Take it Home!!!!

Report submitted by the Hakoah FEDS Committee.

It was the setting that everyone had hoped for. Saturday night at Hensley for the First Grade Grand Final against arch-rivals Roosters FC. The Hakoah FEDS First Grade had done all the hard work to get there. Now only one team stood in their way of a hard-earned trophy.

After last week's debacle at Hawkesbury, where the game was washed out moments before the team bus was about to leave the East, the Division Two Grand Final Repeat was scheduled for the sanctity and surety of Hensley Athletic Field. After all, Astroturf doesn't seem to get affected by the rain!!

The perennial thorn in Hakoah's side, Roosters FC, were the challengers. Roosters have made it a habit of ruining Hakoah's big nights. They defeated our boys on the Hensley Showpiece Event earlier in the season, before winning again in the first round of the finals, forcing Hakoah to play a maximum of three games to reach the Grand Final.

These two sides have had some great battles over the season, including a second round Waratah Cup clash that almost resulted in an actual battle! Nevertheless, both sides had great seasons, and capped it off with qualification to the penultimate game of the year.

With the eyes of over 500 people watching closely, and with marquee signing Neil Jablonski suspended, Coach Mark Robertson sent his side out as follows:

Terry DalBroi

Marc Kacen (c)

Joe Vrkic

Pat Darvill

Greg Moss

Daan Ranshuijsen

Nathan Kosmina Deklan Gilmartin

Rani Rimmer Justin Kosmina Jon Pillemer

Bench: Seamus Dowd, Mosh Wakil, Michael Randall, Adam Joseph, David Helfenbaum.

The match started with a flurry of early chances. Rani Rimmer shot agonisingly wide in just the 2nd minute. Rimmer then created a chance for himself just two minutes later, back-heeling over a defender in the box to give himself a clean shot at goal. Unfortunately, the shot sailed just over the cross-bar.

The frenetic start slowed down midway through the half, as the game descended into a midfield war of attrition. Deklan Gilmartin and Nathan Kosmina were in constant battle to hold possession, whilst the Roosters began to launch some attacks of their own.

In the 25th minute, a Roosters counter-attack caught Pat Darvill flat-footed, leaving the Roosters striker open space to charge Hakoah's goal. Darvill, however, recovered quickly to thwart the Rooster's shot.

With half-time on everyone's mind as the Roosters were gathering momentum, the unthinkable happened. Some tired defending by Hakoah in the 44th minute allowed the Roosters striker some room from a through ball. He made no mistake, toe-poking past an advancing Terry DalBroi.

The half-time whistle blew shortly afterwards, leaving the boys to go into the sheds 0-1 down.

Whatever the coaching staff of Robertson, Hayden Foxe and Alex Robertson said at half time, it worked. The boys returned to the field fired up and rearing to go.

As the midfield tussle continued into the second period, Kosmina began to take control. Yet chances were hard to come by, and the game had definitely been closed down by the Roosters defence.

But in the 55th minute, the game would change significantly for Hakoah. A long-throw from specialist Greg Moss was aimed at the imposing figure of Joe Vrkic. In a desperate attempt to win the ball, the Rooster's defender climbed onto Vrkic, committing a clear foul and giving the referee no choice but to point to the spot. Vrkic stepped up, gave the keeper one look, and smashed the ball straight into the bottom left corner.

1-1.

Smelling blood, Hakoah began to cause havoc for the Roosters. The Kosmina brothers were a constant menace, with Justin up front giving the Roosters defenders headaches, whilst Nathan was putting on a class performance in the middle of the park.

But despite the control, chances were still hard to come by. Both sides were still struggling to break down their opposing defences.

Nathan Kosmina hit the cross bar from a 35-metre pile-driver, before a Kosmina free-kick from halfway forced a clever save from the Roosters keeper, tipping over the bar as Kosmina tried to catch him out.

Kosmina again almost found the winner in the 77th minute, when his corner swung in behind the keeper, forcing a backwards jump from the Roosters number one to keep the scores level.

Robertson looked to his bench, and called on Michael Randall for Rimmer, in what turned out to be the decisive move of the match.

In the 84th minute, Moss found some space down the right, and crossed low into the box. Justin Kosmina cleverly dummied over the ball, leaving none-other than Randall open with the goal-mouth beckoning. His left-foot stubbed shot wrong-footed the keeper and rolled into the back of the net.

With one-hand on the trophy, the boys rallied to stop the waves of Roosters attacks as they tried desperately to find the equaliser. An 89th minute point-blank save from DalBroi kept Hakoah's lead intact, after the Roosters had sent virtually every man forward.

Finally, the final whistle blew, giving Hakoah a hard-earned piece of silverware that they fully deserved.

Congratulations to the Hakoah First Grade on winning the 2011 Premiership!!!!



The First Grade squad. Back row (L-R): Rani Rimmer, Daan Ranshuijsen, Michael Randall, Joe Vrkic, Mosh Wakil, Seamus Dowd, Neil Jablonski, Adam Joseph, Dylan Blumberg, David Helfenbaum, Terry DalBroi, Hayden Foxe (Assistant Coach), Justin Kosmina, Mark Robertson (Coach), Alex Robertson (Assistant Coach). Front Row (L-R): Greg Moss, Deklan Gilmartin, Marc Kacen (Captain), Jon Pillemer, Pat Darvill, Nathan Kosmina. Absent: Dino D'Agrosa.

Road to the Finals ... With Dino D'Agrosa

Each week we will be checking-in with Feds First Grade defender Dino D'Agrosa for an insight into the First Grade's push to the finals from within the looking glass. Dino, known somewhat as the Loch Ness Monster, has been injured for a large part of this season. However, he has a way with words that we feel can give everyone a strong understanding of the First Grade side (largely pointing out their foibles!!). We are all looking forward to his weekly segments.



I've no idea what time the bat phone rang and who rang me but there was a dulcet Scottish tone at the other end of the phone... "We won! We [insert numerous expletives] won!! Yessssssss!!!! Mikey Randall bagged the winner yessssssss!". I was inebriated and a few thousand kilometres away in New Zealand and far from where I wanted to be. In Auckland who was I going to celebrate with.....?

Sod it I went mental and jumped on the nearest group of Polynesians

"We won the effing Grand Final!!!! Get in!!! Randall scored the winner!".

"Aye bro, what d'ya mean you won the grand final bro? We're playing tomorrow cuz the Warriors are playing the Sea Eagles tomorrow bro"

"No mate, Hakoah won the big Gee Eff!!"

Cue bemused looks "Choice bro ay, well dun to the Hakoah bro ay". Off they went shaking their heads clearly disturbed by a grown man in a kilt getting overly friendly.

Outside Northbridge I don't think there is a team in the league who we could've taken greater pleasure in beating than Roosters, and making it even more special, it was in the big one!

At the risk of making this an oscar speech on behalf of the boys and who they would like to thank I think it's fair to say it's been an amazing effort by everyone associated with first grade, the club and the supporters. To go from wooden spooners to grand final winners in one season is testament to Robbo, Foxey and Alex and the effort of the boys throughout the season!

P.S. Well done to Kozzy for getting Man of the Match and of course the changing room favourite Mikey Randall for bagging the winner. Word on the street is you're owed 20 beers!! Mossy is it too late to get Randall's picture on our end of season trip t-shirts!?

Great season lads and some new silverware to go in the trophy cabinet.
Brilliant.

*Signing off to the sound of Queen - We are the champions

Captaining to a Premiership

For the First Grade, the 2011 season started fresh with a complete overhaul of the coaching and leadership structure. After many years as a senior member of the Hakoah squad, 26 year old Marc Kacen was handed the reins as Club Captain for the season.

The decision was a masterstroke, as Kacen led his side to their first piece of silverware in six years, playing a vital role in almost every game this season.

Humble on his achievements during both the season and the Grand Final, where he was a rock in the defence, it was Kacen's proudest moment to call up his teammates to collect their winner's medals.

"To win a premiership with a team is an amazing feeling. To win the premiership as a captain was something special", says Kacen. "To call each teammate, coaching staff after we won was an amazing feeling."

Going into half-time 0-1 down in the Grand Final made the second half that much tougher. But Kacen always knew that his boys could push on and take the trophy away from the Roosters.

"[At half time] Robbo [Coach Mark Robertson] went around the room asking each player if they were giving 100%. Credit to everyone we all answered no. We knew this was the last half of a very long season and everyone was confident that we could bounce back. Our attitude changed coming out of the sheds as Foxy [Assistant Coach Hayden Foxe] said to me 'bring out the mongrel'. That's what we did and we starting winning first and second ball, something we were not doing in the first half."

When the final whistle blew, the ecstasy of the win was clear for all to see. As Kacen says, "The proudest moment, and my greatest sporting achievement, was lifting the trophy in triumph."

Kacen credits the change from 2010 Wooden Spooners to 2011 Premiers to the coaching levels and professionalism of the Club.

"[The difference from last year has been] two main things, professionalism and the will to win", says Kacen.

"At trainings the team and the coaching staff bring a professional attitude which sees the intensity increase. Throughout this season we have left a lot of our wins late and the Grand Final shows the team's 'never give up' attitude. We never

dropped our heads and that's a credit to everyone that we will never give up and keep going."

Kacen was thrilled that Michael Randall, one of the younger members of the side, grabbed the late winner, although he was surprised he buried the shot.

"Were we shocked [that Randall scored], no. Maybe [a bit shocked] that he kept it low!", says Kacen.

"Randall's enthusiasm and strive to succeed has been amazing. He gives everything 100 percent. For a young player to score in such a crucial match is something that he will always remember.

"As a side note, I think Randall has scored a goal this season, just in the wrong net!"

As a Premiership Captain in his first year with the armband, Kacen was ecstatic with the support everyone showed his side, and was thankful to all the Hakoah supporters.

"Thanks for everyone's support throughout the season. From the fans that turned out week in week out and to everyone associated with the club. This win is for everyone affiliated with the club not just the team!"

Congratulations Marc and congratulations again to the Hakoah Feds First Grade, the 2011 State League Division Two Premiers.



First Grade Captain Marc Kacen (centre), seen here celebrating with the trophy with Hakoah stalwarts Adam Joseph (left) and Rani Rimmer (right).

That's the final edition of the Hakoah Feds Newsletter for the 2011 season. We will see everyone back at trials and pre-season come November.

Have a great off-season, and lets make 2012 an even bigger year than 2011!!

For any comments, please email hakoah.feds@gmail.com.

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