

The College participated in the much anticipated annual Sports Challenge against our City friends from St Kevin's. This is always a great day for all concerned. My thanks to all staff for their commitment to the senior sports programmes offered at the College.

## **Football 1<sup>st</sup> XVIII**

**St Patrick's College 11 – 8 – 74      Defeated St Kevin's College 6 – 8 - 44**

**Goal Kickers:** Brenton Payne 6, Jesse Palmer 3, Daniel Bell 1, Tom Templeton 1.

**Best Players:** Jesse Palmer, Liam Duggan, Brenton Payne, Xavier Vearing, Jacob O'Beirne, Rylie Stuhldreier, Shane McAuliffe, Eamon McCuskey.

St Patrick's College defeated St Kevin's College, Toorak by 30 points in the annual fixture between these two iconic Edmund Rice Schools. Played in perfect conditions on the main oval at SPC, St Patrick's College controlled the game from the outset, kicking five unanswered goals in the first quarter, underlining the team's potential.

Playing with a staggering 16 Year 10 and 11 students, it was extremely pleasing that they performed so well against such quality opposition, which bodes well for the future.

The theme of the day was to have fun and for each of the players, to win their own contested ball. It was a theme that the players certainly executed well, as St Patrick's College executed 92 % acts throughout the course of the day, a significant indicator of how hard each player is working. Our benchmark is 20 % acts per quarter and when we achieve this number we will be extremely competitive against any opposition.

The quarter typified the brand of football that we need to play if we are to replicate the achievements of the previous three years. **Liam Duggan** was exceptional in this phase of the game, having four runs to receive from his offensive wing and with **Shane McAuliffe** as the small forward, they provided **Brenton Payne** as the deep leading forward with several scoring opportunities. Brenton played an exceptional quarter, kicking five goals for the term.

Brenton has very good hands and has a wonderful technique when he marks the ball. Brenton takes the ball often at its highest point which reduces the opportunity for his opponent to create an effective spoil. **Eamonn McCuskey** was also extremely effective during the first quarter from his defensive wing and his athleticism provided smooth transition between the two 50 metre arcs.

The second quarter was extremely tight with an astonishing 17 tackles being laid by SPC as both sides kicked two goals for the term. The back six of **Jayden Whitehead**, **Jack Peeters** (until injured) **Jacob O'Beirne**, **Will Austin**, **Oscar McDonald** and **Kane White** were relentless on their approach to the ball and to keep the 2012 APS Champions to only two goals for the half was a significant achievement.

The back six in particular spread really well once we had possession and the run generated from the back half was pivotal in St Patrick's College holding a 30 point lead at half time. **Xavier Vearing** was exceptional in his leadership, and his style of play was a significant reason why we were 30 points up at the main break. Xavier's jumping at the football, his ability to win contested possession, his ability to use the ball effectively and his ability to switch the play when the opportunity presented itself, underlines his continued development in the game.

The final half was very congested and contained many stoppages. Although we were beaten 20/12 throughout the course of the day, our midfield group led by **Ryle Stuhldreier** (in his best game for the programme) and **Daniel Bell**, more than broke even in open play. If we are to "create our own history in 2013" we will need to improve in this area. We need to have numbers around the stoppage with each player having a role. We need to have players prepared to push up into the opposition hit zone, watch the opposition ruckman's hand and read the projection and flight of the ball.

One extremely pleasing aspect of the game, was that when we were challenged in the final half, the players responded most positively. **Jesse Palmer** was one player in particular who continued to lead up to the football as the high forward and his sure hands and soft feet enabled him to be judged Best Player on the ground in a very even team performance.

It was most encouraging that the win, against such quality opposition, was done so without several players, including the two Captains of the Rebels programme – Matthew Crouch and Dallas Willsmore and the Captain of the Western Jets – Brett Bewley.