

Sportsmaster report for 2008

After the relative quiet of 2007, Oakhill athletes performed with exception in 2008, making it the most successful year in ISA history. This year Oakhill won premierships in virtually every sport. In addition, in 2008 Oakhill fielded more teams than ever before – further proof that boys and girls here at Oakhill are passionate about representing the College.

Term 1 commenced with our basketball teams finishing their season and our swimmers commencing their defence of the ISA shield. The 1sts basketball shield, after residing in the Oakhill trophy cabinet for so long, has been shared amongst a number of schools in recent years. However this year the 1st V ensured it was returned to Castle Hill, with an emphatic victory over St Patrick's College Strathfield in the final. The 1sts actually lost to St Pat's in the final round game of the season but comfortably won the final in front of a large crowd.

An initiative the ISA introduced a number of years ago was the introduction of the Champion School Shield for each individual sport. The Shield has slowly been introduced across all sports, with 2007/2008 the inaugural year for the basketball shield. Basically, the winner must perform well in all age divisions, not just the 1sts. This year, Oakhill won the under 13's, 15's, 17's and 1sts competitions, with the 14 A's finishing runners up – guaranteeing the ISA Championship shield for Oakhill. Well done to all players and coaches on their efforts this year. Special mention must be made of year 12 student Ryan Gomes who is the last member the National winning team of 2004. Ryan played in the ISA and CIS teams this year and is also a talented golfer – hitting a hole in one earlier in the year!

With the construction of the new pool in 2006, our swimming team members are starting to see the benefits of having such a facility on site. This year Oakhill Swim team won every carnival we entered including the Redlands Invitational, the St Andrew's invitational, the Oakhill Invitational and, for the third time in a row, the ISA Shield. Our junior and intermediate teams easily won their divisions, while the senior team had to be content with 2nd place. This gives the 2009 team something to work towards – winning all three divisions and the overall shield. Besides numerous efforts in the pool, including a record breaking intermediate medley relay team (Nathan Roughley, Luke Herzog, Jeremy Kwarcinski and Jordan Burden – 1.44.09) a highlight of the season for many was the end of season dinner and awards night held in the Centenary Sports Centre. Very few schools can boast the talent on show here at Oakhill and all swimmers must be congratulated on their dedication to the sport that at times demands so much.

Cricket is also gaining in popularity at Oakhill, with the turf wicket on Damien Oval now over one season old. A benefit of having a turf wicket on site is that the younger cricketers often get to play on a surface far superior to what they are used to playing on. Our Berg Shield team managed to secure two home games on Damien and made the most of the opportunity, eventually winning the State wide title for a second time in three

years. Winning the title also involved a trip to Ballina – for many players more exciting than the final!

The 1st XI also finished their first year in the ISA competition, making the semi finals of the ISA competition, only to lose to St Patrick's College. 2008 involved a steep learning curve for all involved in ISA cricket and we are looking forward to another successful year for the 1sts and 2nds in 2008/2009. The 1st XI did, however, make the final of the Northern Districts Cup competition, only to lose to Hills Sports High School.

Although term 1 is usually reserved for summer spots, 34 rugby players were busily training for a two week tour to South America. Every other year Oakhill rugby teams have the opportunity to tour over seas and South America has proved an excellent destination, both in the standard of rugby and the cultural experience for the players. Highlights included crossing the Andes by bus (and breaking down), Buenos Aires and Iguacu Falls. Planning has already commenced for the 2010 tour!

Winter traditionally is the biggest season for Oakhill sport in terms of number of teams and this year we continued to grow. In winter 2008, Oakhill fielded 20 rugby teams, 15 soccer teams (including a girls team in the ISA for the first time), 10 tennis teams and 7 netball teams. As mentioned early, 2008 was a year of unprecedented success, with our ports men and women winning more competitions than ever before.

As is always the case, our rugby teams enjoyed a very successful season, with no fewer than 6 premierships. The depth that the College has in some of the younger age groups will ensure our senior teams remain a force in years to come. The 1st XV, although not winning the competition, played some outstanding rugby this year and should be proud of their achievements. Special mention to the under 14's who won all of their divisions this year and only conceded one try in the ISA season.

Soccer (or football) continues to grow and this year the 1st XI secured the ISA shield for the second time. The 2008 1st XI was one of the most talented team in recent year and were deserved premiers. Although the final was closer than anticipated (Oakhill won a penalty shootout) the 1st XI arguably the bet team in the ISA competition. It was also very pleasing to see many of our junior team perform so well, with the 13 C's winning their competition and the 14 A's finishing as runners up.

2008 also saw the introduction of a girls soccer competition. Although the team did not make the semis, they were involved in one of the most exciting games of the season in the mid week CIS knockout. Up against Hills Grammar, Oakhill finished the game locked at 3 all and, like the 1sts final, the game went to penalties to determine the winner. Once again, Oakhill prevailed, handing the Open A's soccer team their first of many wins for the season.

Netball continues to grow at Oakhill and this year we fielded 7 netball teams –more than we have ever fielded before. Congratulations to all girls in the Open A's team who won the ISA shield for the second consecutive year. An interesting point about our netball,

some year 12 girls will finish their ISA netball careers never having experience defeat. – a remarkable achievement.

Although it is difficult to compare the success of various sporting teams, one of the most successful teams in recent years is the 1sts tennis team. This year the 1sts won the ISA shield for a second consecutive year and have not experienced defeat since 2006. In addition to winning the ISA competition, the 2008 1sts are CIS, CCC and NSW champions and will defend their title against Leumeh High School in December this season. This year the 1sts tennis team was captained by Blake Smith who also represented the CIS and NSW in 2008. Similar to basketball, our tennis players also won the ISA Championships Shield, winning the 13 A's, 17 A's and 1st and finishing runners up in the 14 A's and 15 A's competitions.

One trophy that has eluded Oakhill for the past 5 years has been the ISA athletics shield. Although the intermediate age group won their division last year, the best our athletics team had finished was second. However, this year the Oakhill athletics team won the junior division, intermediate division and the overall Shield by 60 points. A remarkable achievement considering the pre ISA carnivals we were to attend were washed out. Congratulations also to Solomon House on their victory at the Oakhill athletics carnival.

Although we have only just commenced the summer season for 2008/2009, it is shaping to be a big season. This season we will field 5 basketball teams per age group and the 1st and 2nds cricket teams have enjoyed a successful pre season competition – more news next year.

Each year, one of the problems parents and families experience is the perceived lack of communication regarding sporting times and venues. To try and alleviate this problem, this year the College launched an updated sporting section on the College web site. This useful site includes game times, season draws, student achievements and venue locations. Hopefully this will assist families with planning their weekend in 2009.

On an individual level, there have been some outstanding achievements, including:
Andrew Pasterfield (year 12 2008) – Australian Paralympic team Beijing - Swimming
Nicholas Bertus – NSW Under 15's and Australian Under 15's cricket team – Touring to the West Indies in December.

Gabriel Joseph – NSW Under 15's cricket

Rhys Alchin – Australian deaf soccer team

Allyson Brown – Australian Under 17's basketball team – toured to Guam in September

Justin Yu – NSW badminton

Aaron Apikotoa – NSW All Schools athletics

James Kaan – World Youth Games 2008 - athletics

Josh Calderan – NSW Under 16's rugby

Nathan Roughley – NSW Swimming

Blake Smith – NSW Tennis

Jordan Thompson – Australian Under 14's tennis team – Toured to Europe in 2008

Lucas McLennan – NSW Life saving

Josh Duncan – NSW under 18's Aussie Rules
James Wadell – NSW under 16's baseball

With Australia performing so well in the Olympics this year, it is interesting to note that three ex Oakhill students were competing in Beijing. Well done to Kate Bates (cycling), Grant Brits (Swimming) and Eli Matheson (Hockey) on their achievements this year. Both Grant and Eli won a bronze medal in their events (Eli men's hockey and Grant in the 4 x 200 freestyle relay).

Although only the elite teams are congratulated throughout the year, one of the strengths of Oakhill sport is the commitment shown by our development teams. It is this determination and pride in representing Oakhill that ensures our top teams can compete amongst the best in Sydney and NSW. In addition to all the students playing sport, another major reason for our success is due to the dedicated group of coaches, committee members and managers that assist in ensuring our teams can compete in a supervised environment to the best of their ability.

Mr S. Tulevski
Sportsmaster