

LEADER REPORTS

SEASON 2002

MARCH

Strikers struggle

THE Frankston Strikers have made a slow start to the pre-season State League Cup competition.

Competing in group seven, the Strikers last week lost 3-0 to Lyndale United and on Saturday were handed a 2-1 loss by Old Scotch Waverley.

In Group 12, Langwarrin won its first game of the season when it beat the Cranbourne Comets 2-0.

In the Provisional League Cup, Seaford United will play either Dandenong or Berwick in the second round next Saturday.

APRIL 2

A second half recovery was not enough for Frankston as it lost the State League division two (south/east) season opener 3-1 to Kingston City.

With seven new signings in the line-up, the Strikers took a while to settle in a fiercely contested and even first half.

In the 21st minute Kingston went ahead with a good goal from a corner before doubling its advantage eight minutes later thanks to a hotly-disputed goal.

Coach Russell Black urged his midfielders to push forward in an attempt to bridge the gap after half-time.

The reward came in the 65th minute with a cracking debut goal from Matt McDermott.

The Strikers kept up the pressure on the Kingston goal, but could not beat the keeper. Against the run of play, Kingston scored a third goal in the dying minutes.

The young reserves side scored a comfortable 3-0 win over Kingston City. Frankston heads to Croydon City for this Saturday's round two clash.

APRIL 15

series of heroic saves, including a penalty, by keeper Michael Sivuja kept the game scoreless as players headed for the rooms after 45 minutes.

It was a different story after the break as the Strikers took control launching wave after wave of attack.

The deadlock was finally broken in the 65th minute when Dion Moir put the Strikers ahead from close range.

The young reserves kept their slate clean with a dazzling 7-0 win over Croydon that indicated the club's youth policy is bearing fruit.

Frankston opened its State League Two account for 2002 with a hard fought 1-0 win at Croydon on Saturday.

The Strikers looked unsettled in the first half as the speedy Croydon forwards ran amok. Only a

MAY 6

A dour Lyndale United went within seconds of grabbing its first points of the State League second division season only to be foiled by a relieved Frankston Strikers at Centenary Park.

Despite starting the match with a flurry of attacks on the Lyndale goal, the home side could not find a way past United keeper Howard Fox.

The Strikers continued to dominate all over the park in the second half but poor finishing meant a scoreless draw seemed the most likely outcome.

But as the clock ticked into injury time, Alec Rae was brought down in the Lyndale penalty box and defender Graham Watson capped a solid performance by scoring from the spot to give Strikers a deserved but fortunate 1-0 win.

Player/coach Russell Black showed his usual class in midfield, while Rae and Dion Moir kept the Lyndale defence on its toes.

The Strikers league-leading reserves kept their unbeaten run intact with a 2-2 draw but only after clawing their way back from two goals down.

Frankston faces a tough away clash with second placed Cranbourne Comets on Saturday.

MAY 26

Meanwhile Stonnington City picked a hapless Frankston Strikers to finally stamp its

claims as a State League second division title contender.

The undermanned Strikers were little match for a well-organised City line-up, led by former Benfica man Vata Garcia, who scored a hat-trick for the hosts in the 6-0 drubbing.

Frankston's patchwork line-up held firm for the first 25 minutes before City broke the deadlock with a good goal and added two more before the break.

A more committed Strikers side emerged from the rooms but never seriously threatened the Stonnington goal.

Just as it looked the three-goal margin would carry the home side through to the final whistle, City struck twice in five minutes before completing the rout from the penalty spot.



It's there: Striker Trevor Johnston celebrates his match-sealing goal against Springvale City. Picture: VALERIU CAMPAN/S40FS980.

Some new faces brought enthusiasm to Frankston Strikers and help the side end a month-long run without a single State League second division point.

Less than two minutes before the final whistle, Trevor Johnston

fired Frankston to a well-deserved 2-1 win over Springvale City at Ross Reserve on Saturday.

Johnston has only recently returned to Centenary Park and his introduction late in the game

off the bench proved a master-stroke by injured coach Russell Black.

The visitors went into the game with three regulars back plus new signing Michael Moore, but were without coach Black and Robbie Currie.

With Graham Watson, Tony Beasy, Dion Moir and Alec Rae solid across the back, Frankston rarely looked like conceding a goal in the first 45 minutes.

But the home side kept the Strikers honest by launching a speculative strike from 20m that cannoned off the crossbar.

A spirited start to the second half earned prolific City scorer Frank Bove the opening goal, but Frankston replied three minutes later when Matt McDermott scored via a free kick.

The momentum remained with the Strikers when Johnston and promising reserve Marcus Brownlie were brought on. Johnston capped the game with the winner inside injury time.

The young reserves turned in another classy performance to thrash Springvale 4-0, stretching their unbeaten run to nine.

JUNE 3

Frankston Strikers held on for a scoreless draw after being reduced to nine men against Monbulk.

Despite rough conditions, the match was played a frantic pace with the host looking the more likely to break the deadlock.

Slowly the visitors began to claw their way back into the contest with Graham Watson holding the defence together with Russell Black and flanker Marcus Brownlie busy in midfield.

The job was made difficult for Black's men when Michael Moore was dismissed for a second cautionable offence but again the defence was up to the task.

But the stakes were raised even further when Tony Beasy copped a straight red card, leaving the Strikers only nine men to play out the final 15 minutes.

Incredibly, Frankston substitute Trevor Johnston went within a whisker of snatching all three points for the second week in a row with the best chance of the dying minutes.

Watson, Brownlie, Black and goalkeeper Michael Sivuja were rated Frankston's best.

Meanwhile, the Frankston Strikers turned in one of their best performances of the season against top-of-the-league Kingston City, only to lose 1-0. The Strikers didn't seem worried by Kingston's reputation as having the best defence in the league and went right into attack from the start. Eight minutes into the game they seemed in control when Kingston broke away and cracked a 25m shot into the back of the Strikers' net. Strikers coach Russell Black rallied his team and they were quickly back into the battle. Alex Rae and Justin Carruth dominated the back line and with the support of Graham Watson, Robbie Currie and exciting young talent Marcus Brownlie they mounted clever tactical moves on their opponent's goal. But, as in recent weeks, little was happening for them up forward. The Strikers tried gamely to score an equaliser but fell short. They have only scored eight goals in 12 games and this tells the story of their plight this season. Best for Strikers were Alex Rae, Justin Carruth, Marcus Brownlie and Michael Sivuja.

JUNE 22

Frankston Strikers snared a valuable home point from Saturday's home 1-1 draw with State League second division rival Old Scotch/Waverley.

But it could easily have been all three if not for a first half goal being disallowed due to a close off-side call by the referee's assistant.

Playing with the bitterly cold wind that tested the resolve of the Frankston fans at their backs, the Strikers struggled for control of the ball in the testing conditions.

But with the strong back four of Justin Carruth, Alec Rae, Graham Watson and Marcus Brownlie soaking up the pressure and Russell Black commanding midfield, the host generally dominated.

Just five minutes after the resumption, Matt McDermott put Frankston ahead with a well-struck shot.

But Old Scotch Waverley fought back, pegging the Strikers into their own half and drawing level thanks to Robbie Spence's spectacular effort in the 75th minute.

In his full debut, Marcus Brownlie was rated Frankston's best.

JUNE 10

FRANKSTON Strikers took on lowly Croydon Arrows at Centenary Park on Saturday hoping for a confidence-boosting win. Instead it crashed to a 3-1 defeat.

The Strikers looked good at the start and outplayed their opponents over most of the park, but their attacks collapsed at the 18m line and there were few shots at goal.

Croydon's defence held firm, relying on its forwards to make the occasional breakaway attack and this tactic paid off in the 20th minute when it went head with a well-struck goal.

The Strikers bounced back and continued to dominate for the rest of the half but couldn't get an equaliser.

They made two changes at the break, bringing on forwards Kris Patterson and Trevor Johnston but minutes into the half the home team was rocked by a second Croydon goal.

The two fresh players began to add bite to the Frankston attack and for a frenzied 20 minutes continual shots at the Croydon goal hit the goal posts and bar, and legs and bodies but none found the net. Fifteen minutes from the end Croydon broke away again to score its third goal. Right on the final whistle the Strikers were awarded a penalty and Graham Watson scored from the spot.

Kris Patterson, after coming on in the second half as a substitute, was best for the Strikers.

The reserves gained their eighth win of the

AUG. 10

A Peter Hader goal in the dying seconds robbed Frankston Strikers of a point in its clash with Stonnington City.

The 2-1 result belied the clubs' respective positions on the table as the Strikers dominated from the outset.

With Tony Beasy working well in the engine room in front of the strong pairing of Andy McKenna and Graham Watson, the Strikers stifled Stonnington's efforts going forward.

After a pair of long drives had rattled the Stonnington woodwork, it was the visitors who went one better when Alex Jackson scored on the stroke of half time.

The Strikers responded shortly after the break when Craig Wright, who had been causing mayhem on the flanks, cut inside to slam home the equaliser.

With a draw the most likely outcome, Hader then silenced the home contingent with a goal well into injury time.

Beasy, Wright, Watson and McKenna were rated Frankston's best while youngster Michael Reynolds showing plenty of promise before he left the pitch with an injury.

AUG 17

Meanwhile if veteran Frankston defenders Andy McKenna and Graham Watson were thinking of hanging up the boots, Saturday's humbling 3-0 loss to Springvale City will only hasten that decision.

The Strikers' stalwarts, and fellow back Tony Beasy, were run ragged as the visitors bolted to a 3-0 lead by the break.

On the few occasions Frankston did force the ball over the halfway line, it was rebounded with twice the speed and ferocity by a talented and physically strong City side.

Stung into action by coach Russell Black at the break, the Strikers fought out the game and eventually gained a slight territorial advantage.

But Springvale keeper Val Philippe was rarely tested as the home side meekly surrendered all three points.

Despite the loss, Monbulk's 2-0 defeat at the hands of Cranbourne has ensured the Strikers will remain in second division for 2003.

At the other end of the table, a scoreless draw did not help Frankston reserves' title aspirations, although the Strikers have two games in hand on the top three.

SEP 2

Kris Patterson slept well on Saturday night after half a game for the reserves and a full 90 minutes in the seniors as the Frankston Strikers took all three points with a 2-1 win over Old Scotch Waverley on Saturday.

It was one of Frankston's more impressive wins over a side recognised as one of the league's more robust outfits and which has spent most of 2002 camped in the top five.

Patterson popped up with the opening goal after just five minutes at Gardiners Reserve and with strike partner Craig Wright, always looked threatening. Wright made it 2-0 in the 60th minute.

The Strikers close their 2002 State League second division campaign at Centenary Park on Saturday with the visit of relegated Monbulk.

SEP 9

A Kris Patterson equaliser earned Frankston Strikers a share of the points in their State League second division season finale at Centenary Park. The 1-1 draw with Monbulk elevated the Strikers to a respectable eighth on the table.

In an uninspiring but evenly matched contest played in blustery conditions, relegated Monbulk came out with a point to prove and stuck one in the back of the net after 15 minutes.

The goal stung the home side into action, as forwards Patterson, John Dell'Aquila, Michael Moore and Craig Wright buzzed around the opposition goal.

They were duly rewarded in the 35th minute when Patterson struck his second in as many games.

With the strong wind at its back after the break, Frankston dominated possession, with midfielder Marcus Brownlie raining in cross after cross to no avail.

Monbulk was gifted the opportunity to claim all three points in the final minute via the penalty spot, but the kick sailed wide.