

“MR PRESIDENT”

Ian Graham - Golden Grove Football Club

Golden Grove Football Club are in limbo for the 2019 season, a situation which provides a difficult challenge for President Ian Graham.

Golden Grove are unsure of their status next season which is dependent on the fallout from the Salisbury North Football Club sanctions which continue, at the time of writing.

If Salisbury North find themselves expelled from Adelaide Football League Division 2, Golden Grove will maintain their status for 2019. However, due to finishing in a relegation position this year they risk dropping down to Division 3 if the expulsion does not occur.

“Hopefully we find out soon what happens with Salisbury North whether we’re staying in division two or going back down to division three because we need to know... if it is division three we have full confidence of bouncing back next year” Graham said.

“It’s disappointing as a club we have heard all these rumours, we don’t really know what’s happening, we’ve read what has been in the papers this week but we don’t know... we’re working on the assumption we’ll be in division three next year.

“We asked the league to let us know as soon as possible but we haven’t heard from them up until this point.”

The complication comes at a tricky time for Golden Grove, with many clubs already in the process of planning for next year and finalising off-field positions. *Continued to next page*



by
Adam Daunt



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However, Graham and the senior committee are working hard to ensure the club is prepared regardless of the outcome, he says.

“We’ve re-signed [roughly] three quarters of our players from this year... we’re confident we’ve got the group to bounce back [to division two].”

Fundamental to this optimism for 2019 is Golden Grove’s junior program which has gone from strength to strength in recent times.

Recently, the U13 boys won the Division 1 Premiership, having won it in 2017 while the U11 and U12 boys also made grand finals. The newly added women’s program has been a success as well, with the U12 girls also claiming premiership honours.

“We registered 643 kids this year, which is a club record and from what I’ve been told it is the biggest junior sporting club in Australia,” Graham said. “We’re really proud of our junior program... we don’t consider ourselves elitist, every kid that comes to play for us gets three quarters of footy whether they are one of the better or lesser players.

“Of course, they [the players] want to play in grand finals [and] we want them to play in grand finals, but our role is more about developing them for the next level whether that be senior football or the development teams of the league clubs, or we have even had some success with players getting drafted to the AFL.”



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“MR PRESIDENT”

In doing so, they are aiming to continue the hard-work that Golden Grove has achieved throughout Graham's 15-year tenure as President.

“We didn't have a club-house so a group of us got together decided to push the club forward by getting our own premises.

“I had a meeting with John Howard, he agreed to fund the clubrooms for us... unfortunately we got everything organised, we had 1.2 million for it, then 2007 happened, Kevin Rudd came into power and the Labor Party took the grant off us.

“We had to fight pretty strongly for the grant, with some great support from Tea Tree Gully Council, we eventually got it through Anthony Albanese and built the clubhouse at Harpers Field”. Initially, Graham came to Australia's shores as a boy from north-east England, a talented rugby player in his youth, who embraced Australia's game as a coach, then as an administrator.

“I've been here for 28 years now... I had an accident at work, so I got involved in the footy club, I did a bit of coaching then I became junior coordinator and then President fifteen years ago,” Graham said.

“I played rugby back in England for a club called Ryton, I played to a reasonable level as a junior and then I played a bit over here as well... I probably played over 500 senior games of rugby.”

Outside of football, Graham is kept busy through summer as the Director of Tea Tree Gully's cricket program and recently made his debut as a scorer for international cricket.

“I am the state and international scorer with two other guys, so I score all test matches and shield games and first-class games, and I really enjoy that.

“I started when I was a kid, for the local village team, I scored for fifty pence... as soon as I finished playing my son started so I started scoring... people saw I was neat and tidy, and it was good. Then I got asked to do Tea Tree Gully first grade and then state stuff from there.

“It is very unique but to say you've scored a test match, I did the Ashes test in Adelaide last year, that was my first test match and it was a wonderful experience,” Graham said.

It's all part of what makes Ian Graham one of the most interesting men in the League.



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