



SEASON WRAP-UP 2009

SCOREBOARD - GRAND FINALS

MEN

Division 2

Balcatta b Southern Cross 3-0
25-22, 25-14, 25-17

Division 3

Balcatta b UWA 3-2
24-26, 25-16, 14-25, 25-20, 15-11

WOMEN

Superleague

UWA b Balcatta 3-0
25-18, 25-21, 27-25

Division 1

UWA b Balcatta 3-1
19-25, 25-17, 25-23, 25-23

Division 2

Southern Cross b Balcatta 3-1
30-28, 25-20, 23-25, 25-18

Division 3

Balcatta Red b UWA 3-0
25-15, 25-10, 25-20

Division 4

Bal. Blue b SX Cross Penrhos A 3-1
25-9, 20-25, 25-22, 25-18



Cats everywhere - The courts were a sea of blue and red with seven Balcatta teams making it through to the grand final.



Hands on - Superleague Coach John Ricciardi tried hard to rally the depleted Cats in 2009



High performers - Balcatta Superleague were runner-up champions in 2009 after making the grand final for the first time in ten years.



Minor premiers - Balcatta Division 1 women pose for photo before the 2009 grand final against UWA.

Cats caps off a great season

The Balcatta Volleyball Club capped off one of its best ever seasons winning five premierships in 2009. The Cats made seven grand finals, winning four on the day - the men's Division 2 and 3 competitions, and women's Division 3 and Division 4. As well, Balcatta Division 1 men won the Masters competition. Cats President Louisa Kinnear said that the club had a tremendous year. "It was great to see our women's teams growing in strength and having a team in every grand final," she said. "This was the first time our club has achieved this feat."

Balcatta bows out in style

Reigning men's Superleague premiers Balcatta bowed out of the finals race for the first time in more than five years after losing to Southern Cross in a thrilling five-set first semi-final (23-25, 20-25, 25-21, 25-21, 13-15). It was a topsy-turvy year for the Cats who got the season off to a poor start after missing key players, including Michael Prindiville and James Clinch. But the Cats scraped into the top four and started to gain form, giving them a glimpse of hope to win their third premiership in a row. But despite a brave effort from the young Cats, the season ended early this year - in the first semi-final. "After a disappointing year we regrouped towards the end of the season and gave Perth Coastal a very big scare in the first final," coach John Ricciardi said. "The players gave 100 per cent, but we were limited in the number of Superleague players we had to choose from. Let's have a good rest and get back on top again next year with a full and healthy team!"

Supergirls challenge UWA

Balcatta made the grand final in the women's Superleague for the first time in 10 years after crushing Southern Cross in straight sets in the preliminary final. The Cats lost in three sets to minor premiers UWA, but were competitive in each (22-25, 19-25, 24-26). Balcatta took the third set into extra points - tying it at 22-all after being down by eight points. Cats coach Russell Hampton said that UWA deserved their win, but the Cats should be proud of their progress during the year. "Our girls played with courage and tenacity and moving forward I know that we have changed the culture of our Superleague women's program from one of complacency to one where high performance and accountability are the norm," Russell said. "Well done girls on a great season!"

Cats pipped at the post

After winning the minor premiership in the women's Division 1 competition, the Cats lost the grand final in four sets to UWA. With the game tied at one set all, the Cats gave up an early lead in the third set and didn't recover until Captain Ali Mees served to save five set points. But this wasn't enough to save the set. Then after leading the fourth set 23-22, the Cats failed to take the game to five sets. Cats coach Aaron Leung said that the loss hurt badly. "After last year's Grand final loss we thought we were better prepared this year," Aaron said. "But we just didn't play at our best when the pressure was on and we made too many errors."



SCOREBOARD - GRAND FINALS (OTHER CLUBS)

MEN

Superleague

Southern Cross b Rossmoyne 3-2
17-25, 25-22, 17-25, 25-21, 15-

Division 1

Southern Cross b Rossmoyne 3-0
25-17, 28-26, 25-22

Division 4

Perth Coastal b Sth Cross Blue 3-1
25-21, 25-21, 27-29, 25-21

WOMEN

Division U17

Sthn Cross Penrhos A b Sthn Cross
Penrhos B 3-1
25-15, 25-19, 22-25, 25-6



In focus - Division 1 men's coach Steve Petsos

Balcatta falls short at the end

After a steady season in the men's Division 1 competition, Balcatta came under strong pressure to retain its spot in the top 4 in the final game of the season. But the Cats beat ECU to qualify for the finals in fourth spot, which meant they would meet Balcatta Masters in the first semi-final. After losing the previous Derby, Coach Steve Petsos' boys rebounded to win the first semi-final in straight sets to advance to the preliminary final. Unfortunately for the Cats, they lost to Southern Cross and bowed out of the finals race. In recent years the Cats have had a stranglehold on the premiership in Division 1, so in a year where the club made the Grand Final in most divisions, it was ironic that the club missed out in this division. Marty Bertuleit's Division 1 Masters team were awarded the Masters premiership for being the highest ranked Masters team in 2009.



Proud Cats - Division 2 women made the grand final after scraping into the top 4.

Cats pounce on competitors

Balcatta came within a whisker of causing one of the upsets of the year - in the women's Division 2 competition. After sitting out of the top four all year, the Cats scraped into the finals. Then the Cats won the first semi-and preliminary finals to make the grand final, narrowly losing it to Southern Cross in four sets. After losing a marathon first set (28-30) and then the second (20-25), the Cats bounced back to win the third set (25-23), but lost the fourth (18-25) and the game. Congratulations to the girls and coach Mel Johnson who continued to develop the squad and boost their confidence throughout the year.



Celebration time - Division 2 premiers

Balcatta boys save best for last

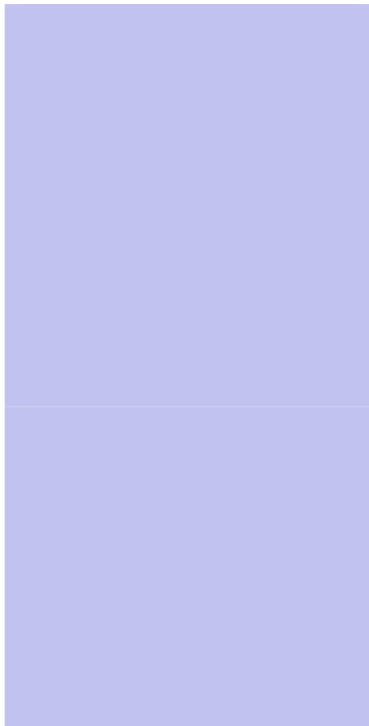
Balcatta recorded an amazing three set win in the grand final over Southern Cross in the men's Division 2 competition (25-22, 25-14, 25-17). Cats coach Romano Fracassini said that the final score made it seem like an easy game, but the boys made it that way. "Each player did exactly what I asked of them and I was so proud to see them all play as a team," Romano said. "Everyone played well, including Nick Terpsis who deserves a special mention. He spent most of the first two sets on the bench, but when he came on in the front court for Jason Sewell, he scored four points in a row in the first set and three in the second set attacking and blocking superbly. This is the best example of playing for a team."



Top Cats - Balcatta Division 3 beat UWA in three sets to win the grand final - 25-15, 25-10, 25-20

Cats' purr-fect season

Balcatta Red capped off a great year by winning the Division 3 women's premiership, comfortably beating UWA in straight sets. The Cats were minor premiers, won both the Champion and State School Cups and in December will fly to Melbourne for the National Schools Cup. Coach Mitchell Collins said that he would like to congratulate his girls on an amazing year and thank them for their efforts. "All the girls are extremely talented volleyball players," Mitchell said. "Hopefully we can take this year to another level at the National Schools Cup."



Back-to-back premiers - Balcatta players celebrate the club's second premiership in two years in Division 3.

Young guns bounce back

A young Balcatta team beat a more experienced UWA team in the Division 3 men's grand final. The Cats won in five sets after trailing two sets to one (24-26, 25-16, 14-25, 25-20, 15-11). After a great season and winning the minor premiership, the Cats looked like losing the "big one". They were down in the fourth set, but Cats coach Brendon Buckley managed to fire up his team with the Cats bouncing back to win the fourth and final sets. The Cats were undefeated for most of the season, losing once to UWA. But after losing narrowly to UWA in the second semi-final, the game could have gone either way. The Balcatta players were determined to win the premiership and never gave up, even when the game looked like slipping away.



Cheshire Cats - Balcatta girls are all smiles after winning the Division 4 grand final

Cats upset minor premiers

Balcatta beat Southern Cross Penrhos A in the women's Division 4 grand final in four sets (25-9, 20-25, 25-22, 25-18). The young Cats did a great job without regular coach Nicole Leighton, who was playing in the Division 1 grand final. John Sewell, who filled in for the day, said that it was unfortunate Nicole's game clashed. "But with a few hand signals to court 2, we kept her up to date with the scores," John said. "Both Nicole and I are very proud of the improvement of every player in this group this year and the achievement of winning the grand final."





CLUB AWARDS 2009

Cats celebrate season in style

The Balcatta Volleyball Club announced its Most Valuable Players at the annual awards function at the Victoria Park Bowling Club on 31 October. Congratulations to all the winners.

Men

Superleague Division 1 Paul Prindiville
Tim Wilkins and
Tristan Jones

Masters Division 2 Mauro Venitti
Division 3 Mitchell Collins
Elliott Hill

Women

Superleague Division 1 Elise Chapman
Ali Mees

Division 2 Jo Falconer
Division 3 Blue Bree Morehu
Division 3 Red Kate Ganz
Division 4 Tina Blobin



Captain fantastic - Division 3 grand final captain Elliott Hill looks set for a big career in volleyball (with John McGrath MLA on grand final day).



In focus - All-rounder Mitchell Collins, the winner of this year's Clubman and Coaching Award.

High achiever wins top club awards

Mitchell Collins capped off a tremendous season as a coach, player and leader at the Balcatta Volleyball Club winning this year's Clubman of the Year and Coach of the Year awards.

Mitch captained the Division 2 men's premiership team and coached the women's Division 3 Red team to a grand final victory. These girls also took out the State Schools Cup title in their age group this year and in December will travel interstate for the National Schools Cup.

He is also on the committee for the Balcatta and Northern Stars clubs. Mitch lives and breathes volleyball and has made a great contribution to the Club and in particular, to junior volleyball this year.

See next article for all the club award winners.

Club Award winners

Referee of the Year - Brendan Buckley
Coach of the Year - Mitchell Collins
Most Outstanding Junior Kate Ganz
Recognition Award - Layne Van Smaalen
Best Club Person - Mitchell Collins



Whistleblower - Brendan Buckley won this year's Club Referee of the Year

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A special thanks to Marty Bertuleit who contributed all photographs published during the year.