4 April 2024

**2024 Annual Report**

What a cracking year for Rusty Bears Softball!! Our Juniors lead the way with increased numbers allowing Rusty Bears to field 3 standalone teams. Lee Robinson flew the flag for the Open Women combining with Comets and our Men enjoyed a social competition this season.

Rusty Bears would like to thank the CCSA committee for their continued efforts to keep softball alive on the Central Coast. Unfortunately, it is a task that is just too big for 7 people and so it is time we all stand up to be counted and contribute if we want our sport to survive.

**T-Ball – Minor Premiers, Grand Finalists**

New players, new coaches, new officials, and just a whisker away from a grand final win. Most importantly, we saw huge development in our youngest team, due to the ongoing commitment of coaches and parents. With most of the team being bottom age, it stands them in good stead for the upcoming season.

**Modball - Minor Premiers, Grand Final Champions**

This team built on its strong foundations to drive another successful year. New players fitted in seamlessly and were strongly supported by a willing coaching staff. Most pleasing was the continued development of the battery team. Such improvement can only come from putting in extra training hours, which can only be achieved with the support of family. It is exciting to see such development on the coast and look forward to what this team can achieve moving forward.

**Junior Softball – Minor Premiers, Grand Final Champions**

This was the last hurrah for many of our players in this team as they move from the junior grades into senior teams. It was pleasing that they were able to wrap the year up with a great result in the grand final.

It has been a pleasure to watch this core group of players move through the age groups over the last 5 years, welcoming new players and farewelling some, but always sharing their skills and knowledge. You are a credit to Rusty Bears and an example to those that follow.

**Mens – Social**

The season started with 3 Men’s teams however due to injury and work commitments, it was decided to move the men to a social comp where they could enjoy the game without the worry of player numbers and forfeits. This allowed for some cracking games over the season with some big hitting and even bigger outs!

**HONOURS AND AWARDS**

**Modball Player of the year** – Rose Marchant

It was great to Rosie’s dedication and commitment recognised with award. Not only did she play in Modball, but was a regular player in the Junior Softball team and spent countless hours honing her pitching skills with extra drills and training. We have no doubt that with this continued effort, Rosie will be a prominent figure in any team she plays in and will be a player to watch in the future. The sky is your limit!

**Junior Softball Player of the Year**– Cooper Smith

Cooper continues to go from strength to strength and has had a huge year which was duly recognised with this award. His strong leadership and sportsmanship is evident every time he takes the field and his hard work behind the scenes has ensured his continued development. We look forward to seeing what is next!

**CCSA Junior Person of the Year** – Sophie Walbancke

The CCSA Junior Person of the year recognises contributions to CCSA over and above their peers.

Sophie is a passionate committed softballer who has a tenacity for the game rarely seen in our juniors. She competed in both the Modball and Junior softball competitions this year, showing skills well in advance of her age group. As her confidence grew over the year, she was a regular fill in for the Open Women’s team. She competently fulfilled her umpiring duties, often doing more than her share. Sophie was a dual representative for CCSA competing at both the U12s and U14s State Championship. She was rewarded with an invitation to the NSW Static Camp for her age group, skills that she brought back and shared with her teammates. Sophie’s dedication to softball and CCSA is an excellent example of a player who is willing to not only accept the opportunities CCSA afford her, but to share those experiences, which then contributes to the growth of CCSA.

**CCSA Senior Person of the Year** – Kellie Smith

The CCSA Senior Person of the year recognises contributions to CCSA over and above their peers and for the betterment of CCSA.

For those that know Kellie, this award is of no surprise. The quietest of achievers who always gets huge results. The Central Coast Softball Association Committee reached out to Kellie to step into a vacant Committee position, as the registrar. In no time at all she also stepped up to the Representative administration role as well as being a regular Representative Official. The depth of her involvement and more importantly the impact her involvement had was instrumental in CCSA being a viable entity for the 23-24 season. She has led by example and passed her experience on to the newer members of the committee and leaves the CCSA Committee in a much better place.

**Hall of Fame** – Cooper Smith

This award recognises Central Coast players that have been selected to play at a State and National Level. Cooper joins both Rusty Bears founding members Rebecca Penfold and Natalie Handforth who have both played at these levels.

**Rusty Bears Cub of the Year**

This is the first year that the Cub of the Year has been awarded. Donated by Leica and Fiona Clark, the award acknowledges outstanding achievement and takes into consideration not only a player’s skills, but their conduct and sportsmanship both on and of the diamond, and their commitment to the sport and to Rusty Bears.

Cooper Smith is this year’s recipient recognising hiss extensive sporting achievements in being selected for:

* Central Coast Representative teams
* NSW Country Blacktown Jnr International Challenge
* Softball Australia U14 Development Squad
* NSW All Schools Softball
* NSW Under 16’s

The award also recognises his efforts in implementing Rusty Bears Junior Softball. He approached the club asking if a junior team could be considered and was given the task of not only recruiting players, but coaches, umpires and scorers as well. Due to his efforts (soundly supported by Kellie and Shaun) Rusty Bears has one of the most successful Junior Softball programs within Central Coast Softball.

Congratulations Cooper!

**Thank you**

Rusty Bears would like to acknowledge the parents who were there for set up, BBQ and canteen duty and generally just being available to help out. Every assistance is appreciated, and it is you who are really the backbone of our club so thank you.

Rusty Bears would like to thank CCSA and all clubs for supporting all rep players through the allocation of fundraising days and of course for the purchase of cakes, raffle tickets and whatever else was on offer.

Here is to a better stronger 2024-25 season!

Kind regards,



Melinda Dagg, CSC

Secretary

Rusty Bears Softball Club