



2020 Annual Report

*"Talk with your feet,
play with your heart"*



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Club Officials 2020

PRESIDENT:	Stephen James
Vice President:	Matthew Hyde
Secretary:	Adrian Martinez
Assistant Secretary:	Tito Tealdo
Treasurer:	Mathew James
Club Captain:	Matthew Hyde
Equipment Manager:	Vahid Ameripour
Social Media Manager:	Kimberley James
Delegate to the Association:	Mathew James
General Committee:	Daniel James Omar Brena Dilshan Karunaratne Reegan Rajakumaran

First Club Players

Adrian Martinez	Marco Melgar
Aidan Calgaro	Mathew Hyde (captain)
Alex Polochaz	Mathew James (manager)
Calvin Ittura	Omar Brena
Daniel James	Regeen Rajakumaran
Dilshan Karunaratne	Stephen James
Elliot Jauregui	Tito Tealdo Brena
Ignatious Chopamba	Vahid Ameripour
Kennu Challenger	

Trophy Winners

Most Consistent

- Kennu Challenger & Calvin Iturra

Most Improved

- Elliot Jauregui & Vahid Ameripour

Golden Boot – Top Goal Scorer

- Matthew Hyde

Golden Gloves – best Goalkeeper

- Aidan Calgaro

Club Person of the season

- Kimberley James

Golden Crutch (biggest season injury)

- Adrian Martinez



Team Statistics

Sydney Cup Men's All Age Final Points Table

Team	Played	Byes	Won	Drawn	Lost	GF	GA	GD	Points
GPM Eagles	13	1	11	0	2	52	9	43	36
Bexley Lions	12	2	9	0	3	50	15	35	33
Inner West Counsel	13	1	10	0	3	51	18	33	33
St Johns Bishopthorpe	12	2	7	0	5	31	23	8	27
Columna	13	1	7	0	6	45	34	11	24
St Barnabas	12	2	4	1	7	18	39	-21	19
Ambassadors Football	12	2	3	0	9	24	52	-28	15
Wentworthville Uniting Gold	13	1	3	0	10	28	59	-31	12
Wentworthville Uniting Blue	12	2	1	1	10	13	63	-50	10

Semi Finals

Minor Semi - St Johns Bishopthorpe v Inner West Counsel 1-0

Major Semi - Bexley Lions v GPM Eagles 1-0

Prelim Final

GPM Eagles v St Johns Bishopthorpe 4-1

Grand Final

Bexley Lions v GPM Eagles 1-0

Players

Name	Year Commenced	Games Played	Goals Scored
Aidan Calgaro	2020	13	0
Calvin Iturra	2020	13	1
Kennu Challenger	2020	13	1
Mathew James	2020	13	4
Omar Brena	2020	13	4
Stephen James	2020	13	9
Tito Tealdo Brena	2020	13	1
Matthew Hyde	2020	12	18
Dilshan Karunaratne	2020	11	0
Elliot Jauregui	2020	10	0
Marco Melgar	2020	10	1
Daniel James	2020	9	1
Vahid Ameripour	2020	9	2
Ignatious Alexio Chopamba	2020	8	3
Alex Polochacz	2020	7	0
Reegan Rajakumaran	2020	7	4*
Adrian Martinez	2020	3	0

**First Goal for the Club*

President's Report

What an exciting and eventful year to be Club President. Firstly, I am so honored to be elected President of Bexley Lions FC in our very first year.

We were a bit unsure how we would go starting a new club, but everyone has been so enthusiastic and supportive it made the process much easier. An eventful time to create a club at the start of the plague (great story to tell the Grand-kids and future Bexley Lions players), COVID-19 lockdowns at the start of the season meant we were unsure if we would even be able to have our first season. With an anxious wait and some very eager men, we were finally told we would have a season, albeit a very late start.

So, on the 4th of July 2020 we stepped proudly onto the field in our pink and black and played our first ever game as Bexley Lions FC in the Sydney Cup. With a lot to prove this season, our first game against Ambassadors FC was played at Jones Park, which we won 5-2. Reagan Rajakumaran being the first player to score a goal for Bexley Lions. We made our mark and quickly proved we were a team to be taken seriously this season.

With a few early injuries, we stayed consistent, for the most part, and cemented our place in the Grand Final against GPM Eagles. An intense Grand Final match saw our opposition with majority possession, however, in what has become true Bexley Lion style, we never give up, we play with all our heart and we won 1-0 in the most emotional Grand Final game.

Our Club motto "Talk with your feet, Play with your heart!" was quickly embraced by the team, and everyone showed week in, week out, how proud you are to wear the pink and black. For a group of guys, new and old, to come together without any training the entire season and do what we did, shows how passionate everyone is and how well we all worked together this season. I am definitely looking forward to a bigger and better season with you all next year!

I just want to give a shout out to our supporters who come down each week, thank you for your continued support and cheering us on, it means a lot. We have enjoyed watching our support grow week to week and I look forward to seeing you all and more next year.

I would also like to say a massive thanks to Mathew James, who worked hard to establish the club, getting it registered, ordering our kits, liaising with the Association throughout the season and more. Thank you for your hard work.

Finally, thank you to my wife Kimberley for all the behind the scenes work she has done this year, getting newsletters out each week, keeping our Facebook page updated with photos and videos from the games as well as information to pass on. With COVID-19 we had so much additional paperwork and things to comply with, she kept up to date with all the changes and ensured we complied, so we were ready to play each week.

I look forward to seeing everyone and some new faces for an even greater year next year.

- **Stephen James**

Secretary Report

The 2020 Churches Football Association (CFA) Sydney saw our beloved Bexley Lions FC make their mark on the men's all age Sydney Cup Division. Our inaugural season in the competition ended with an unexpected fairy-tale like ending, but then again, our club motto is "talk with your feet, play with your heart". Due to our never say die attitude I'm proud to say that our men's all age team, dramatically yet almost inevitably, were crowned champions of the 2020 CFA Sydney Cup.

The team is made up of a combination of older and much younger guys. It's a deadly cocktail of experience and technique versus energy and raw power. Many of the boys have played together for years, but this was their first time playing for the pink and black of Bexley Lions FC. The "old gang" (James brothers trio, club captain Matty Hyde, los Latinos Adrian, Tito, Omar and Elliot, Dilly, Reggie and Vava) were joined by young and new blood, in some cases the same blood.

Tito teamed up with younger brother Calvin Iturra who had an exceptional debut season with the club. The young Peruvian tore up the right wings of Beaumont, Yatama, Jones, Freame, and many other parks around Sydney. His relentless desire to press, pressure and tackle the opposition, coupled with his never ending stamina, and ability to take on and beat an opponent, is a thing of beauty. Calvin also brought his partner in defensive crime Kennu Challenger to the squad, who also made an impressive start to his Bexley Lions career. Kennu's ability to read the game from the CB position, calmly play out from the back and dominate most of his aerial duels, makes him a beast in defence. Kennu formed a solid partnership with Matt James at the base of our defensive unit. The addition of the 2 youngsters in defence made our backline one of strongest in the competition. Not only could they defend well, they also had the ability to contribute to the team's attacking moves.

Also joining the team was Englishman Ignatious (Iggy) Chopamba who put in many shifts in attack alongside Matty Hyde. His physical strength and technical ability, or "tekkers" as they call it in the streets of the U.K, enabled him to create headaches for many opposition defenders, especially those from Wenty Blue who saw Iggy claim a brilliant hattrick. The pick of the bunch was his 3rd goal which saw Iggy dribble past 3 defenders after being picked out by Steve with an accurate through ball, and finished the move by coolly slotting the ball between the keeper's legs. Marco Melgar played an important role for the team throughout the season, often coming off the bench to add fresh legs. He played 10 and scored 1, and always supported the team until the final whistle. The Peruvian added experience, calmness, and excellent technical ability to a very talented squad. He fought hard for the team on the field and supported the team valiantly while off it.

In goals we welcomed Aidan Calgaro who had spent 10 years away from football due to his family and work commitments. Aidan, who as a youngster looked up to Italian goalkeeping legend Gianluca Pagliuca, put in some memorable goalkeeping displays throughout the season. He arguably saved his best performance for last pulling off 4 world class saves in the Grand Final. He was deservedly rewarded with the man of the match. Aidan was encouraged to return to football and join Bexley Lions FC by older brother Alex Polochacz. The big striker was returning to football after 18 months out of the game due to a horrendous injury, in which he broke his femur and completely tore his calf. His powerful presence, excellent ball control, and link up play made him the perfect target man in attack, allowing for others to make runs off him. Alex came close to scoring his first goal for the club after his bullet header came crashing off the woodwork against Columna.

Dilshan (Dilly) Karunaratne teamed up with long-time friend, Reegan (Reggie) Lucian. Dilly's versatility enabled him to play on both wings, and had a chance to score his first goal for the club when he stepped up to take a penalty against Wenty Blue. Unfortunately for Dilly his penalty kick was hit with too much force and flew over the crossbar, past the bowling club at Yatama Park, and straight into orbit.

Reggie's season was tainted with injuries, but his desire to give every last ounce of energy for the club and his teammates, was appreciated and respected by the players and supporters. The dynamic striker tore his right calf muscle at Beaumont Park early in the season which would keep him out of action for 5 weeks. Reggie's pace, dribbling ability, and wicked left foot caused countless problems for defenders. He ended the season with 4 goals in 7 matches. Ironically, his best goal came in the 3rd round match against Columna where he struck an unstoppable shot with his "weaker" right foot.

Vahid Ameripour played his role as a winger scoring 2 goals in 9 matches. He contributed to the goalscoring records by slotting the ball past the helpless Columna keeper after a neat turn inside the box in a hard-fought game. Vava's experience and strong physicality added extra steel and bite to the midfield. Elliot Jauregui has played with the "old gang" for a few years, and although still a youngster at 23 years of age, plays with a wise head on his shoulders. The versatile Peruvian featured predominantly on the wings, and was an integral part of the Championship winning side. Elliot constantly gave his all for the Bexley Lions FC shirt during the season, and his love for the club was evident when he celebrated Steve's winning goal in the GF by sprinting upfield from a defensive position to celebrate with the boys. His physical strength, stamina, strong defensive abilities, and ability to link up with his teammates makes him an important piece of the puzzle.

The teams striking pink and black kit quickly caught the attention of the other teams in the league. Not only did the team look good, they played well too. The team was quick to gel together and form a strong understanding both on, and off the field. The boys always played with their hearts, with real determination and grit, but like the club's motto says they also let their feet do the talking, which was showcased by the 6 Latinos on the team. Bexley Lions FC started the season strongly. The style of the team was starting to develop, and consistently produced positive results. Calvin and Kennu formed an immediate connection with Matt and Steve James in defence, making it extremely difficult for the opposition to break through the defensive line. If the defensive line was broken, there was still the difficult task of beating Aidan in goals.

The team battled their way through the season without one of their soldiers, the little yet feisty Adrian Martinez. The Colombian midfield maestro suffered a season-ending injury with a broken foot and torn ligaments during the 3rd game of the season against Columna at Freame Park. His technical ability, diverse passing range, and defensive attributes plus his ability to cover the field and fill in the gaps would be missed, but not lost as the team was able to fill the void by sliding Omar Brena into the heart of midfield next to fellow Peruvian, Tito Tealdo. Omar who normally operates on the left wing was immense in the middle of the park throughout the season. His brilliant technique, pace, and stamina were crucial to Bexley's style of play. Both Omar and Tito put in brilliant defensive performances which helped to protect the defensive unit, while also contributing with a combined total of 5 goals.

In attack, Bexley Lions FC had the luxury of knowing that Matthew Hyde has the ability win matches in the blink of an eye. His incredible ability to run at defenders and weave his way through the tiniest of gaps, quick change of pace and direction left many defenders eating his dust as he would go on to score 18 goals in the club's inaugural season. His best goal was scored against Inner West Council, controlling the ball as he received it in the air, swivelled and unleashed an unstoppable volley into the bottom left corner. However, the goal of the season was scored by Tito. His long distance strike against Columna at Yatama Park was a screamer from way outside the 18 yard box which flew past the helpless goalkeeper. The ball seemed to swerve and dip in mid-air and was perfectly placed into the top right hand corner of the goal leaving the keeper without a chance. Matthew James' stunning free kick in the semi-final came in at a very close second. His free kick curled beautifully into the top left hand corner of the goal leaving the keeper rooted to the spot. Special mention to attacker Reggie, who had the honour of scoring the club's first ever goal against Ambassadors in Round 1 at Jones Park. We can't discuss goal scorers without mentioning our 2nd highest goal scorer, and scorer of the winning goal in the Grand Final, Stephen James. Although not the prettiest goal he's ever scored, his typical headed goal from a set piece sent the players and supporters wild. Steve chipped in with an impressive 9 goals coming mostly from the left back position.

One of Bexley Lions FC's biggest strengths is their solid and gritty defence, which was marshalled throughout the season by the James twins. Matt and Steve possess years of experience, and have an incredible ability to read the game, and win most challenges they commit to. They were instrumental in the team's championship winning run by helping to prevent goals being scored, while also scoring many at the other end. The James trio is completed with younger brother Daniel (Danny) James who dons the best haircut in the team, no questions asked. Danny has a fire and passion which is contagious and lifts the team even when he's on the bench. As a James brother, Danny would link up almost telepathically with his 2 older siblings, who would pick him out with long balls over the top, something they've been doing since they were kids. His strength and understanding of the game make him a valuable player to the team.

The boys were never in danger of missing out on a top 4 finish, it was a matter of which position out of the top 4 they would occupy. We eventually finished 2nd behind GPM Eagles, meaning we had to face the Minor Premiers in the semi-final. The game was tense and stressful for those supporting on the sidelines. For the players it was a grueling game which required them to remain defensively disciplined for 90 mins. Club captain Matty Hyde had a glorious opportunity to put Bexley ahead in the first half, but just couldn't get enough behind his header. The boys stayed solid and were rewarded late in the match after Matthew James' free kick found the back of the net.

The Grand Final was another display of courage, determination, and belief that the seemingly impossible was still achievable. Aidan had a 10/10 performance and if not for his miraculous saves, the game would have been over by half-time. Aidan's cat-like reflexes and excellent positioning allowed him to make several crucial saves which kept the team alive. He got down quickly and was able to palm away a couple of shots which were destined for the back of the net. On another occasion he sprinted out of his goal to put pressure on the attacker and used his feet to make an excellent save. After surviving multiple heart stopping moments the team essentially stole the trophy from GPM Eagles via Steve James' headed goal from Omar's delightful corner. The Peruvian's inswinger narrowly missed El Capitano's boot who was trying to flick the ball on, and fell invitingly for Steve who arrived in the box unmarked to leap and head the ball into the back of the net sending the supporters into raptures at Jones Park. It turned out to be our only shot on goal, our only chance, but it was all we needed. Our men's all age Sydney Cup team were announced as Champions on the 17/10/20 in the club's first ever season in existence.

Special mentions must go to Kimberley (Kim) James who is the club's Social Media Manager and COVID-19 Officer but, to label her either of these titles would be an insult to all her hard work. Thank you to Kim for taking photos, recording videos, uploading content, typing up weekly newsletters, taking care of admin duties, and so much more behind the scenes. We thank her for being an integral part of the club, and for being the word of reason on the sidelines. We would also like to thank those who helped and supported the club throughout the season; Rikita Tikou, Megan Raisin, Christina Yaniv, Christine Granero, Pru, Levi James, Makaii James, Tyler James, E'lyssia James, Braxton James, Isabella Ameripour and Fabian Martinez. Thank you also to the family members and friends of our players and club members for supporting the club.

Our men's Sydney Cup team will go down in folklore as heroes. A bunch of guys, and their families and friends who came together to be part of something special. The inception of a football club which values inclusion, respect, family, and the desire to play football the right way. The Bexley Lions FC way. To quote our club motto "Talk with your feet, Play with your heart". This is exactly what our boys did on the field until the final whistle of the final game. Congratulations to the 2020 CFA Sydney Cup men's all age team, the best team in the competition, the Champions!

- Adrian Martinez

First home game at Beaumont Park



Photo credit – Fabian Martinez

Before the Grand Final vs GPM Eagles



2020 Grand Final Winners - Sydney Cup MAA

