
Joondalup City Safe from Relegation and Win Their Fourth Reserve Title in a Row

Erick Lopez

Joondalup City have successfully avoided relegation with a 2-0 win over Ashfield on Saturday. While their Reserves secured an emphatic four league titles in a row with a thrilling 5-3 victory over second placed Ashfield Reserves.

Joondalup's goals came from youngsters Erick Lopez and Devon Rindel to cap an assertive performance away from home and ensure City's place in State League Division One next season.

"The new management team knew our challenges would be huge." Joondalup City First Team coach Gary Kalaher said. "The backbone of the previous season's successful team had either left the club or retired. Most pundits were tipping us to go straight back down and after a 5-0 defeat in our first game and they were probably thinking they had got it right.

"But we had faith in our young squad most of whom were very new to senior football.

"To see the Reserves clinch the title on the same day the first team were mathematically safe, I think was fitting." Said Kalaher.

Joondalup started the game brightly for most of the first half controlling possession and looking dangerous in attack. Before Ashfield's Goalkeeper was forced off with injury early on, after a collision with Luke Wilson leading to the keeper rolling his ankle.

City continued to create chances from corners with Ashfield's substitute keeper being forced to save Lopez's corner off the line.

Minutes later, Tyler Smith was fouled outside the box and up stepped Erick Lopez with a free-kick curled over the wall and in off the crossbar. Smith tapped in the ball to break the deadlock beyond doubt, with the goal eventually awarded to Lopez.

Ashfield's day got worse with their skipper receiving his second yellow-card after a lash out kick on Luke Wilson.

The second half saw most of the chances dominated by the home side before some individual brilliance from Devon Rindel to secure the win. Who after getting nutmegged, regained possession and dribbled passed two defenders, slotting the ball into the bottom corner of the goal from outside the box.

Joondalup City currently sit eighth on the ladder, out of 11 teams, with 25 points.

In the Reserves fixture, Joondalup City went into the game knowing that a win, against second placed Ashfield, would seal the Division 1 State League Reserves title.

City came out the blocks blazing, scoring three goals in the first 10 minutes with one from Samuel Rawlings and two from Sam Phillips. Ashfield answered back with two quick goals later in the first half to make it 3-2.



Joondalup were certainly up for the occasion looking rapid on the counter attack and answered back with two goals in quick succession from Phillips and Rawlings again to go into half time 5-2 up. With Phillips completing a first half hat-trick and Rawlings with a brace.

Ashfield started the second half strong an early goal to make it 5-3, but the visiting side held on the for the rest of the game to win and be crowned reserves champions four years in a row, with this season being their first in Division One.

“Why did the reserves win the league with so many changes every week?” Joondalup City Reserves coach Kevan Towers asked. “Belief, character, respect, high skill level and mate ship. At the end of the day it is teamwork, from Hans [Assistant] and Darran [Physio] right through to the players and coaches believing in each other.”

“You must have a reserve coach that understands that his main role is to feed the first team, not hold players back for his own glory. An assistant, kit man, match day manager and Physio complete the jigsaw. It is imperative that they all understand the goal, and that is 'the first team'.” He said.

“Mixing youth with experience was a major factor this year. The coaching team could easily have put an older first team squad together that finished mid table. That is a Band-Aid. We wanted to build a squad for the next 5 years. It was a case of slowly slowly.” Said Towers.

Joondalup City will play their last games of the season away to UWA Nedlands today at UWA Sports Park.