

# 'Shifty' move as Phelan returns to win a premiership medal

Doncaster East star Chris Phelan played in the Division 1 grand final without eating solid food since breaking his jaw more than a month ago.

Phelan had been on a soup diet since suffering the injury on August 3 and lost between six and seven kilograms, but was a shock inclusion for last Saturday's decider against Croydon.

He had his jaw broken in two places and underwent surgery after he was collected high in the Round 16 game against Knox.

The Subiaco great was not

## EFL Football

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named in the Lions' side during the week, was not listed on the team sheet and not included as one of the emergencies.

Doncaster East will be fined \$160 for the move.

Doncaster East coach Steve Buckle conceded the tactics to keep Croydon in the dark as to whether Phelan would play were "shifty".

He said after the semi-final

victory that it was unlikely the three-time WAFL premiership star would take his place in the side.

Phelan finished with three majors to be an important player in the decider, helping lift the Lions into the top flight for the first time in club history.

Doncaster East won the game, 14.20 (104) to 9.14 (68).

"I was keeping myself fit on the off chance I'd be able to play," Phelan said.

"I had a week off where I was pretty sore and after that I was back into it keeping myself as fit as

possible because you never know what can happen.

"It's always good to play in a grand final — they don't come around every day so I gave myself every opportunity."

Phelan said he had doubts on the day of the game that he would be right to play.

It was only once he sought a second opinion from a doctor that he was given the all clear.

"It (the injury) was in the back of my mind early but once I started playing I was pretty sweet because you've got to focus on playing," he

said. "Up until the first bounce I was a little bit worried."

Buckle said Phelan trained away from the group in preparation for the decider.

"It sounds a lot like cloak and daggers but he was behind closed doors doing private training sessions and boxing to get himself right," Buckle said. "He was working his backside off and then he was coming down to training probably the last two weeks to get that touch back."

Buckle informed the playing group on Tuesday

night that Phelan would be included and to keep the news under wraps.

"If it took Croydon's focus off what they came in planning ... then we would take that," he said. "It was probably a little bit over the top but I think it worked."

"They were still asking questions right up until the door knock trying to find out if Chris was playing or not."

"We held the team sheet back. I know it's a bit shifty but it's sheep stations you're playing for and any advantage you can get, you take."

# Perfect finish for Friars' fairytale

## Cobras fangs just miss flag

Manningham Cobras are on their way to Division 2 but without a premiership after going down to Aquinas by a two points in the Division 3 grand final at Garvey Oval last Sunday.

The Cobras inched themselves ahead for the first three quarters, before the momentum shifted in the favour of the Bloods in the final term as Manningham missed five crucial shots at goal.

A late major from Aquinas's Michael Cardamone was enough to put the final nail in the coffin and the Bloods saluted 8.14 (62) to 7.18 (60).

"We're grateful and thankful that we got to a grand final and gone up a division but it's a bit like dancing with your sister; we didn't get any silverware for all that hard work," Manningham Cobras coach Frank Salantiri said.

"In the last eight or nine minutes, we had the ball in our forward line maybe 90 per cent of the time, and we had five shots at goal that were all pretty kickable and unfortunately we sprayed them all."



Whitefriars' Mark Stafford and Jordan Wright celebrate a goal during last week's grand final. (Right) Heartbreak for the Cobras Pictures: Andy Brownbill and David Crosling

## Whitefriars completes season sweep with grand final win

### VAFA Grand Finals

#### Nickolas Zakharia

Whitefriars claimed the Division 2 grand final at Box Hill City Oval last Sunday, a historic final act to what was the fairytale of an undefeated season.

Though Brunswick NOBs led the Friars by four points at halftime, it wasn't long before the Friars belted out six goals to two to become Division 2 premiers, 10.14 (74) to 7.7 (49).

Since the opening bounce of the season, no team has

### THE FINAL SIREN

#### VAFA GRAND FINALS

**Division 2**  
Whitefriars v Brunswick NOBs  
Box Hill City Oval (September 15)  
Whitefriars 3.6 4.6 8.9 10.14 (74)  
Brunswick NOBs 2.0 5.4 5.5 7.7 (49)  
WHITEFRIARS Goal Kickers: M. Stafford, C. Hickey, J. Connellan, D. Wood, A. Hands, M. Nitas Best Players: T. McGurgan, M. Stafford, H. Murray, K. Height, A. Marcollo, M. Ravenar  
BRUNSWICK NOBs Goal Kickers: J. Schmidt, J. Adkins, C. Gavaghan, J. Perez, N. Burgin Best Players: P. O'Donoghue, N. Burgin, D. King, L. Whelan, J. Perez, M. Brown

**Division 3**  
Aquinas v Manningham Cobras  
Garvey Oval (Sunday, September 15)  
Aquinas 2.3 3.7 6.11 8.14 (62)  
Manningham 3.3 5.5 6.14 7.18 (60)  
AQUINAS Goal Kickers: M. Cardamone, A. Naulty, J. Robertson, M. Allwood, B. O'Loughlin, A. Martelli Best Players: L. Barnes, R. Fisher, J. Morrison-Story, M. O'Malley, B. Burke, J. Fisher  
MANNINGHAM COBRAS AFC Goal Kickers: A. Sukkel, A. Raso, J. Cawsey, A. Kinniburgh, R. Saunders Best Players: N. Zappala, L. Morris, A. Bodin, T. Bell, M. Parkes, A. Baltrouwt

been able to stand in the way of Kristan Height's boys and the silverware.

"Winning the grand final results in us having the perfect season, so it's a great accomplishment," Height said after the game. "We're really happy with just how the boys have worked, their effort and their commitment to the club and to me as coach has been unbelievable. They've got their reward now."

With the seniors bringing home the trophy for the first time since 2002, Whitefriars will move up to Division 1 next year.

Toby McGurgan was essential to the Friars' victory after working his magic in defence, while Mark Stafford finished the day with three important goals.

"After halftime, the boys really stood tall and that was something I was really happy with," Height said.

"Brunswick were very good today, they challenged us throughout the game and I was really pleased that our boys responded to the challenge."

While he also managed to win the league best and fairest medal this season, Height said the biggest reward in footy will always be the premiership flag.

"You obviously don't play for individual accolades, but I suppose it is nice to win those things and look back on as you retire," he said.

"Obviously the main focus was that we qualified for finals ... and won the grand final."

"That's what you play footy for isn't it? To win that grand final, the team success."