

St. Joseph's First XVIII have played their final game for 2015, coming up short against St. Patrick's College, 5.10 (40) to 10.3 (63), in the Herald Sun Shield Semi Final on Wednesday.

Coming in to the match, the boys were understandably excited with the prospect of a semi-final against a top side and despite the questionable song choices by Sam Threlfall on the bus, there was an upbeat vibe going in to the game.

Paul Clohesy was struggling to hold back tears pre-match as the nostalgia of being back at North Port Oval was almost too much to handle. Clohesy sounded like a broken record before the game, telling everyone who walked through the gates about the day he kicked 10 for the Borough.

The first quarter was a tight contest as both sides came out firing but it was Joeys who hit the scoreboard early through Jack Henry, taking a spectacular mark on half forward before kicking the game's first goal.

Whilst Joeys dominated possession, poor forward entry and wayward shots on goal saw them go into half time with only one major registered on the scoreboard. Great defensive pressure from the likes of Harry Walker and Ben McNamara kept the Ballarat boys to only three goals for the half.

Joeys burst out of the blocks in the third term and an early goal from Raven Marika had the travel-weary Geelong crowd on their feet. But the excitement was short lived as St. Pats kicked three quick goals and rode a wave of momentum into the final break, with a 33-point lead intact.

Inspirational final term performances from a pair of Patrick's (Dowling and Kelleher) was not enough for Joeys as SPC ran out 23-point victors.

Whilst the overall result wasn't the outcome Joeys had hoped for, there were a few quality performances for the visitors.

AFL draft prospect Tom Doedee was adjudged best afield in his first game for the school as he was unstoppable across half-back. Doedee finished with 18 disposals, five marks and five tackles.

The backline was at its usual high standard whilst the likes of Jack Buckley and Nick Connors had the ball on a string all day.

At the end of the day, disposal efficiency and inaccuracy proved costly for Joeys and ultimately they were just unable to match it with an efficient SPC outfit.

"We played really well today, if you were going to analyse the game, we didn't make the most of a couple of opportunities but we know how good a side they are," Coach Chris Lynch said post-match.

Captain David McNeel, whilst disappointed with the result, was proud of his side for how far they had come during the year.

"Really proud of the boys this year. Really played well (today) and don't think we could have done much more." He said.

Numerous people were thanked by Captain and Coach after the game, and rightly so, with the First XVIII program made all the better by the huge amount of support from parents and staff.

A notable omission from the acknowledgements was self-proclaimed Director of Football Operations Andrew Scaddan, but Jack Buckley was kind enough to take the time to say a few words about a man who has put so little time and effort into this team.

"He's a big timer, he only comes for when we have success, a real band wagoner who needs to get his priorities straight." Buckley said.

Regardless of the way the year ended, a fantastic effort from the side to get so far this year, a testament to coaches Jono Holt (absent) and Chris Lynch.

Not even Threlfall's deplorable efforts on the auxiliary cord could dampen the trip home as the boys celebrated being together as a team for one last time.

Angus Kramer – Year 12 Foley House Captain

HERALD SUN SHIELD SEMI FINAL – Wednesday 29th July

SJC Geelong 5.10 (40) def by SPC Ballarat 10.3 (63)

GOALS: Patrick Dowling 2, Jack Blood 1, Raven Marika 1, Jack Henry 1

BEST: Tom Doedee, Jack Buckley, Ben McNamara, Jack Quinn, Harry Walker, Nick Connors, Sam Simpson

@ North Port Oval, Port Melbourne