U19

The stage was set for the biggest show down for 2019. The Southern Storm Colts were back to face their hottest rivals in the Lindisfarne Two Blues in an actual repeat of the 2018 Grand Final. The Storm had fought tirelessly throughout the entire season for the chance to be back in this position, and the ride there wasn’t easy.  The list of injuries the Storm had was as long as Collingwood’s, with George O’Neill coming off early, carrying a hamstring injury from round 1 till round 5, before breaking his collar bone in round 7, Will Polley dislocated his knee in round 6 after just 3 games, which resulted in a number of surgeries, Ollie Townsend was to break his collarbone whilst filling in for the u16’s in the back half of the season, Noah Clifford was to miss the second half of the season with a serious shoulder injury and 4 of the boys were looking unlikely on Thursday night before the big day. But the Storm were to overcome these hurdles and adapted to this, the boys dug deep. Four under 16’s, Will Clifford, Elijah Cowen, Ryan Clark and Jonte Fahey, had played enough games throughout the year to be able to help the boys out and prove vital to our sides success throughout the year. The boys were training 4 times a week and sometimes even playing two games of a weekend. We would like to thank the parents for the hours they put into getting the boys to and from all the games and trainings. It was tough but the boys made it and the whole club couldn’t be more proud.  
  
With the early start, the weather could not have been more sublime, the sun was shining and the ground was as dry as it ever could be. The boys were pumped and it was evident right from the first bounce. With the Storm getting the football into their forward line early. The Two Blues seemed to be stunned by the heart and intensity of the much smaller and younger team, busting the packs and surging the football forward in what was an all-out dog fight. George O’Neill who was able to return to the Storm in the second half of the season, wasn’t going to let this day go in anyway of the the Two blues favour. O’Neill alongside Josh Coad in the midfield made the lives of coaches and the Two Blues hell, with the pair rarely letting anything past them as well as smashing any and every pack that stood in their way. The determination to get revenge on the Two Blues made O’Neill the hardest man on the field to tackle, with up to 4 of the Two Blues clinging onto him but being unsuccessful in making him go to ground. Although The Storm had control of the play in the first quarter, in true Two Blue fashion a few goals in transition slipped through the cracks early on. The Storm were very quick to respond, with Josh Coad making the most of his rest from the midfield up forward, taking numerous marks as well as kicking 3 goals zip in the last 5 minutes of the second half to allowed the Storm to go into quarter time with a 1 goal lead. (SS 3.2.20-LF 2.2-14)  
  
The start the Storm needed was on the board and the boys were fired up. The Storm knew the Two Blues weren’t going to have another quarter like that and the boys needed to lift. The dog fight for the football continued and the Cygnet, Channel and Kermandie came out of the Storm, with everyone going in with their head over the footy and worrying about the rest latter. The Storm had locked the footy down and weren’t going to let Lindisfarne get a sniff, but a few heat of the moment decisions late in the term saw the Storm slip a bit and give away a few silly free kicks which resulted in two quick goals to the Two Blues. The Storm were able to regain momentum through the rotating midfield group of O’Neill, Coad, Murray Bastick and Luke Paton. Paton was able to provide a spark and agility to get the football down to the forwards. Bastick read the football well in both positions across the ground and was able to shark the opposition’s ruck contests many a time. Will Clifford too was exceptional all day, getting the football down to the forwards every chance he got. Clifford was able to get a well-deserved goal by working hard and following up the footy which was to keep the Storm within a 4-point margin going into half time. (SS 4.2.26 – LF 4.5.29)  
  
With one half of football left for the entire season, one half with a group of guys the group may never get to play with again, the Storm were ready. The Two Blues seemed extremely shocked with the intensity of the Storm and that they weren’t going to roll over. The first minutes of the third were scrappy and hard fought for both teams. No one was willing to give their opponent an inch and tempers were running hot. Unfortunately, Lindisfarne were able to use the football a bit better than the Storm, but it was the backs that were massive. Samuel Ryan in his first year of football was exceptional, the new found confidence of Ryan, was to see him be able to attack the footy out of fullback and not give his opponent an inch, which in turn, proved vital to the Storm being able to clear the football. Brayden Dowling and Ethan Lovell across the half back line were very classy, mopping up everything that came their way as well as providing run and direction when the Two Blues tried to flood back. George O’Neill time and time again could not be stopped in his tracks, but what made him even more dangerous was tackle pressure and intensity that aided in the forward run of the Storm. The Third was the one quarter that the Storm didn’t need and with the Two Blues finding the gaps and being able to capitalise on it, they were able to boot 3 goals 2 whilst keeping the Storm to zip in what was a strong premiership quarter.  
  
With one quarter of football for 2019 to go, the boys knew this was their game for the taking, their chance to be able to show the other clubs that it didn’t matter that the Two Blues went undefeated all year and that majority of their side was 2-3 years older, so the boys took the game by the horns. The Storm controlled the game, Lovell, Dowling and Ryan continued to mop up everything that the Two Blues tried to get their way. George O’Neill and Luke Paton ran their hearts out through the midfield, smashing every pack and gaining every inch they could. Things started to fall into place, Josh Coad who was kicking the football long every chance he got out of the midfield was able to rotate into the forward line and take an absolute Specky Magee. From the exceptional mark, Coad was able to put the goal the boys needed on the board, booting his forth for the day and bringing the boys within 17 points. Will Clifford and Elijah Cowen coming off the wings showed the boys 4 years their senior that they weren’t afraid to tackle or get the football forward, with the pair racking up a high number of kicks and tackles for the quarter. A missed opportunity at the 16-minute mark hurt the Storm, but Murray Bastick was to respond with an exceptional on the run goal from outside fifty to bring the boys to just ten points behind. Time wasn’t on the Storms side, but they had the Two Blues rattled and their tails between their legs, with the Storm not giving up getting it forward. Unfortunately with no time on, despite keeping The Two Blues scoreless for the quarter, The Southern Storm Colts were unable to come back from the third quarter hick up and the Two Blues were able to run away with a 10-point win in the 2019 Grand Final. Final score: Lindisfarne 7.8-50 def. Southern Storm 6.4 – 40  
  
Better players for the day included George O’Neill, Josh Coad, Luke Paton, Samuel Ryan, Bryaden Dowling and Ethan Lovell.  
  
Goal kickers included Josh Coad 4, Will Clifford 1 and Murray Bastick 1  
  
Thank you to all the supporters, sponsors, families of the boys and the award sponsors, we would not be able to do this without you guys and it has been an amazing season. To the boys, the whole club couldn’t be more proud of how much you guys have achieved throughout the last 3 seasons together and we hope to see you all back on the track as a group next year.  
From the Storm boys – To Cam Ashlin and Pup Lovell, we are so thankful for everything you have done for us as a team and for all the hard work and long hours you guys have put into us. You have helped us make memories that will last a life time and we will always cherish the season we have spent under your guidance.  
Thank you to all the parents that got their boys to training, that helped out on Saturdays before the game, in the canteen or that contributed in any way they could to help our great club, we would like to say a massive thank you and we hope you and your sons return next season. To the trainers Stephen Booth, Rob Davies, Dave Bone as well as Andrew Jurd, thank you for being there every Saturday and ensuring we got the best care.  To Squeak Coad and Reggie Clifford, thank you guys for being their every Saturday, with Squeak being the Team Manager and Reggie being the runner. Your hard work hasn’t gone unrecognised and we appreciate everything you guys have done. We look forward to what next season will bring us and we will be back! Go Storm!