

Historic fixtures for Falcons in Season 2014

THE AFL experience has been extended to next year's crop of Geelong Falcons with the TAC Cup club set to play an historic match under lights at Simonds Stadium.

In a first for the competition, the Falcons will host the Calder Cannons at the Geelong AFL venue on Friday, May 9 at 7.45pm.

Falcons coach Andy Allthorpe said the club's regional manager Michael Turner had negotiated the night match and is delighted the AFL hopefuls will have this experience.

"It's going to be phenomenal," Allthorpe said. "Mick mentioned it to the group that it was a possibility and you could just see their eyes light up. They were so pumped to hear that.

"Any games we get to play at Simonds is preparing them for that (AFL level). The more that we can expose them on AFL grounds is only going to benefit them."

The 2014 TAC Cup fixture has been released with the Falcons travelling to Warrnambool to begin their season with a clash against neighbouring rivals the North Ballarat Rebels on Sunday, March 30.

Their first of four home games at Simonds Stadium is the following week against the Dandenong Stingrays on Saturday, April 5.

The Falcons will also play five home matches at Werribee in 2014.

Another feature of the Falcons' draw is they will play their first ever home game at Camperdown's Leura Oval, when they host the Rebels in their return clash in round 13 on Sunday, July 6.

The Falcons use Camperdown as a training base for their Hampden squad and also play their squad trial games there every summer. Allthorpe said returning to the town to play a regular season match is a way to say thanks for the Camperdown Football Netball Club for hosting them.

"They certainly provide us with a great training facility over the pre-season," Allthorpe said.

"It's a great ground. The footy club has certainly put a lot of work into making it a fantastic facility."

The Falcons will play the Queensland state side at Werribee on Saturday, August 2 but the match will still count towards the TAC Cup ladder.

Its other matches at Simonds Stadium are against the Northern Knights (Saturday, May 3) and Oakleigh Chargers (Saturday, August 16).

The Falcons' first block of pre-season training finishes next Friday night with the squad resuming its 2014 preparations in late January.

Allthorpe said the squad would be cut to about 70 hopefuls next week. He said the final list of about 50 players would be decided after their Falcons practice matches – in Camperdown – in late February.

Allthorpe said this year's squad members Scott Dixon, Aaron Christensen, Doug Bond and Jack Berry were among those in contention to fill the five 19-year-old spots available on their list in 2014.

Brad Green