HISTORY

In 1996 John Griffen started up a sports venture designed to give students who weren’t as successful in the traditional school curriculum a chance to be part of a school program that would build relationship skills, independence, chance to be successful, and create positive, life-long memories that they would cherish forever. Now in its 17th year, the program continues to provide these opportunities and has seen it grow into a high level program as one of the schools’ marque programs that is offered to the students.

John Griffen took 2 girls teams with him to Canberra in 1996 for the 12th running of the Australian Volleyball Schools Cup where he achieved instant success winning a Gold Medal with the Intermediate Girls Division 2 team. In 1998 the competition shifted to Melbourne and was the first time boys teams were entered in the school. A number of different staff members had ventured on the program and there was experimentation with transport as the team went by train to Melbourne in 1999. By the year 2000, up to 7 teams made up the squad numbers and the squad had added 3 silver medals in that time.

Clayton Disley came to the school in 2001 and helped Griffen try to lift the profile and standard of the school, but it wasn’t until 2004, the year Disley finished up with the school, that they were rewarded for his hard efforts. The Under 17 Boys Division 1 won the school’s second Gold medal along with the Under 14 Boys Division 2 who won a Silver Medal. This was the first boys’ medal ever achieved by the school. The school had worked its way in to the top 25 schools and was on the up.

The year of 2005 was where the program found a new high of professionalism with the inclusion of Ben Princi to the Willunga Staff. John Griffen also pulled off a massive coaching selection after Natasha Trottman organised to bring Hugh Nguyen to the school. With Princi able to run training sessions after school, Griffen was able to be a coordinator of the program. He also started the inclusion of a 50 minute lesson for the Year 8 girls during the week as a stepping stone to strengthening the standard of the program. This year was our biggest medal hall ever with 2 silver medals to our Under 15 Girls Division 1 and Under 17 Girls Division 1 teams and 2 bronze medals to our Under 15 Boys Division 1 and Under 16 girls Division 2 teams. In our 10th year we had become the 12th ranked school in the nation.

The program continued to be successful as Hugh Nguyen introduced Sunday sessions and Princi continued to run the Volleyball side of the event. In 2006 we achieved a Silver Medal to the Open Girls Division 2 and a Bronze with our Under 17 Girls Division 2. Our U/16 Boys came within 3 points of becoming our first team ever to qualify for Honours Competition, the highest standard competition at the championships. It was 2007 that saw us take our biggest squad ever of 10 teams and achieve our 3rd and 4th Gold Medal’s with the Under 17 Girls Division 1 and Open Girls Division 2 achieving the ultimate result. This built into 2008 where for the first time ever we had a team who achieved selection into the Honours Competition. Not only did they qualify, they won a Bronze medal in an amazing 5 set game which was arguably our best result achieved by any team to that point. Our Open Girls Division 2 team also achieved a Bronze to continue their amazing success as a team. It was the first time we had believed we were a chance to finish in the top 10 and set our goal to build on our ranking of 14th from the previous 2 years.

In 2009 was the best result in the history of the program as we achieved 2 Gold Medals and our amazing Honours Girls achieved a Silver Medal becoming the second ranked team in Australia for their age. It was the amazing 5 set marathon, where they came from 12-3 down to win 15-13
which will be remembered as arguably the best performance by a Willunga High School side in a single match. The Open Girls became the only team ever to win 2 Gold medals as a team in their 5 years at the school making them one of the most successful teams of all time. Our Under 17 girls, with the aid of one of our 2 Australian Reps, Steph Collins won our 6th Gold Medal in the Under 17 Girls Division 1. The school finished as the 11th ranked school in the state, only 4 points shy of being a top ten school.

Determined to reach the top 10 in our 15th year, Nguyen and Princi put in as much effort as they could to produce more honours teams. We achieved 3 teams as our Under 15 Girls and Under 16 Girls joined our Under 17 Girls (playing their 3rd year of Honours) in playing in the elite competition. Apart from the amazing effort of our Under 15 Boys who made the Bronze Medal play off, we were unable to achieve a medal. While we retained our ranking of 11th, it was the first time the squad had not medalled since 2003.

The depth of our program had declined in 2011 and with Hugh Nguyen heading over to Canberra for work and John Griffen retiring, it was left to Princi to do the joint role of coordinating and coaching the program. While the Open Girls Division 2 capped off a successful 5 years for 3 of our honours girls and rewarded our 2nd Australian representative Sarah Gould with a silver medal, the results of the other teams were below the expectation. The Under 16 Girls Division 1 team was the only exception making the Bronze Medal play off and unfortunately going down in 3 tough sets.

Over the years we have been known to be quite successful with the School Banner Competition. Our first win was in 2003, with back-to-back wins in 2006, 2007 and our famous Volleyball Pandemonium which represented the coming of the Panda’s to Adelaide Zoo in 2009. This is a result of the dedication of Nick Belchamber, and Art teacher at the school since 2004 who encourages and guides student designs and works with our players to paint the banners, which hang up proudly in the school gym.

Another wonderful servicewoman to the program is Kay Flower. She has been with the program for 11 years, doing a hundreds of little tasks, such as preparing food spread, first aid, organising washing, taking kids to hospital just to name a few. She was awarded with her 10 years of service in 2010 and continues to be a vital member of our program today.

Since 2006, we have had 192 students represent the school in this program with a guess of at least 120 more playing between 1996 and 2005. Our current ranking has dropped back to 21st in the country but with the potential for 3 Division 1 sides and all sides with the ability to be successful, the program may regain some momentum and Willunga can once again strive for a top ten position.

GOLD MEDAL TEAMS
Intermediate Girls Division 2 - 1997
Under 17 Boys Division 1 – 2004
Under 17 Girls Division 1 – 2007
Open Girls Division 2 – 2007
Under 17 Girls Division 1 – 2009
Open Girls Division 2 - 2009
HONOURS TEAMS
Under 15 Girls - 2008 (Bronze medalists)
Under 16 Girls – 2009 (Silver Medalists)
Under 17 Girls – 2010 (6th)
Under 16 Girls – 2010 (9th)
Under 15 Girls – 2010 (9th)

STATE REPRESENTATIVES (INDOOR)
Chris Little
Steph Collins (Australian Representative)
Sarah Gould (Australian Representative)
Elke Jarvis
Chloe Jarvis
Josh Proctor
Courtney Proctor
Allyson Veasey

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER AWARDS
Jake Crate Under 17 Boys Division 1 2004
Megan Hooper Under 17 Girls Division 1 2005
Rachel Hutchinson Under 15 Girls Division 1 2005
Amy Hoffmann Under 17 Girls Division 1 2007
CJ Mejica Under 15 Girls Division 2 2007
Megan Hooper Under 15 Girls Division 2 2007
(Award stopped running in 2009)

Most Successful Teams/Players

GIRLS 2005-2009
Rachel Hutchinson ©
Amy Hoffmann
Chantelle McDonnell
Nikki Page
Emily Bell
Kara Hank
Taylor Hill
Peta Waterlow (Korotkov) (2005,6)
Jasmine Oster (2008)

2 GOLD (2007, 2009)
1 SILVER (2005)
1 BRONZE (2006)

GIRLS 2008-2010 – Honours
Brianna Gregory ©
Elke Jarvis
Georgia Hank
Maddy Lund
Carly Roberts
Morgan Hill
Jess Hoffmann
Myriah Smith
Maddy Stangewitz (2008)

1 SILVER (2009)
1 BRONZE (2008)

Elke, Bree, Georgia - Silver in Open Girls Division 2 (2011)

**GOLD – OPEN GIRLS DIVISION 2 2007**
Megan Hooper ©
Jordan Hooper
Simone Chambers
Casey Binns
Bonny McCallum
Kate Saunders
Katrina Symonds

**GOLD – UNDER 17 GIRLS DIVISION 1**
Kelsey Allen ©
Steph Collins
Cj Mejica
Amy Stone
Jemma Turner
Shaelan Dunlop

**GOLD – UNDER 17 BOYS DIVISION 1**
Jake Crate ©
Gordie Beath
Stephan Braithwaite
Jared Creek
Ryan Crockford
Tyson Reid
Stephen Behan
Matt Oakes
Dorian Cooper

**GOLD – INTERMEDIATE GIRLS DIVISION 2**
Reagan O'Keefe
Sarah Murphy
Rikki Lovell
Merridie McLaren
Mel House
Darleen Bishop
Yasmine Pimlott
Courtney Proctor ©
Allyson Veasey
Georgia Roberts
Georgia Kelly
Lucinda Ralph
Katrina Munzberg
Cayla Schubert
Amy Wallace

HONOURS TEAM (2010) – Under 16 Girls
Amy Gregory ©
Chloe Jarvis
Lisa Denny
Marnie Coombe
Tessa Hank
Elora Currey
Emma Wood
Amy Small

PLAYERS – 3 Medals or more

COACH’S
Shantel Wreford – Bronze 2006, Bronze (Hon) 2008, Silver (Hon) 2009.
Gianni Petrucci – Silver 2006, Gold 2007
Shane Boal – Gold 2004
John Griffen – Gold 1997
Jake Stangewitz – Gold 2009
Hugh Nguyen – 2005-2010 (Specialist Coach that changed the program to new heights)

SCHOOL BANNER WINNERS
2003
2006
2007
2009
SCHOOL RANKING (since 2005)
12th out of 102 - 2005
16th out of 107 - 2006
14th out of 109 - 2007
14th out of 107 - 2008
11th out of 115 - 2009
11th out of 120 - 2010
21st out of 137 - 2011

SCHOOL SERVICE AWARDS
Kay Flower – 10 years (2009)
Shantel Wreford – 10 years (2012)