

Starsport

Juniors rise again

Football

By Ben Hope

WHEN the Noble Park Junior Football Club couldn't field an under-nine team last year they knew they had to do something to attract new members.

Club president Phil Snow said the fall in player numbers over the past few years was the result of changing demographics in the district as well as a lack of awareness about the club.

"Last year we had to combine our under-10 and 11 teams and we couldn't field an under-nines team," Snow said.

"I don't think we were as proactive in the market place as we should have been; we really had to kick-start the club to get it moving again."

Now, thanks to the support from parents and volunteers, things are looking up for the club in this year's competition. Snow is now expecting the club to field a team in every age group from under-nines to under-16s, including a girls' youth team.

"Already this year we have a full squad in the under-nines and we're only four or five players away from filling under-10 and 11 teams," Snow said.

"The club has worked hard distributing more than 9000 flyers to schools in the district to attract new players to the game.

"This year we are also making people more aware of what we are doing as



Noble Park junior football club players Anthony Marson, Benjamin Marson, Justin Carlsson, Dylan Carlsson and Jordan Marson are looking forward to the 2010 season.

well as opening the club up to make it more accessible for parents to get involved."

Two of the club's volunteers, Trish Marson and Steve Allender, also ran an after-school program at Noble Park Primary School. It involved a one-hour session weekly to teach the fundamental skills and basic rules involved in AFL football.

"We have a lot of migrant families in the area and a lot of them didn't have a

concept of football so it was really good to introduce that to them," Mrs Marson said.

"Out of the 30 kids we ended up with there were only two or three that had played football before. It was great to teach them the skills that allowed some of the boys to come over to the competition teams.

"We have a range of different cultures in our area and we have been trying to bring the concept of football to

them. "It's not just for the children, but we also try to make the families comfortable and aware of what is around and available to them as well the advantages of playing a sport like AFL football."

The Noble Park Junior Football Club was founded in 1964 and has a record of 113 grand final wins, 57 premierships and 37 best-conducted club awards.

For details or to get involved with the club this season contact Phil Snow on 0433 429 287.