



14 teams won't fit into a final eight, and so the battle for the playoffs begins as what shapes as a very competitive Div 1 men's competition starts.

Sunbury welcomes Bulleen back to D1 to start the season with news the Boomers have undergone some big changes. The Jets will also have a number of new faces and on their home court they should open the season with a win.

One of the best teams last season, Blackburn, heads down the highway to face Latrobe City with the home team tipped to be up and about early. The Vikings are arguably the most respected 'team' in the competition and they will be ready for a hot start, so mark them down for a close win on the road.

Keillor takes the short trip to Melton and following a solid pre-season under coach Liam Glasscott, you have to like the Thunder's prospects this season. The Thoroughbreds have been incredibly competitive the last couple of years, but some big changes in the off-season will no doubt see them take a little time to settle. Look for a Thunder win.

Chelsea and Western Port open up with what is always a great battle. Corey Standerfer will be back at it and doing what he does best, with all report suggesting some young faces amongst the Gulls' squad, including Brad Murfett. Western Port was really impressive last season and incredibly consistent, so by no means will this be an easy game - for either team. Expect a very close finish, perhaps with Chelsea sneaking home on the back of a big game from Standerfer.

Melbourne Uni has drawn the short straw and heads down the highway first up to play Warrnambool, a team that we all know only too well after last year's incredible achievements. The big change down the coast undoubtedly is the absence of homegrown star, Nathan Sobey. Expect to see plenty of young faces for the home team, but they certainly have enough experience to ensure the Black Angels are up against it. Very hard to tip against Warrnambool at home and we're not about to start here. It's always tough to know exactly where the Black Angels sit, but no doubt we are all looking forward to seeing some improvements this season and some consistency from week to week.

Warrandyte is another team to have gone through some significant changes in the off-season with Ross Charles now at the helm. The Venom is always a tough proposition at home and it's Keysborough with that task ahead of them to open the season. The visitors have looked solid during the pre-season and will fancy their chances here, especially if their wings can get out and run. A real chance for both teams to get their season off to a flying start, but something says it might be Keysie in front at the final buzzer.

The opening weekend ends with just the one game on Sunday with two regional teams going head-to-head. Geelong is another team with a very good record at home over the years and with Shepparton coming to town, they'll want to make sure the Supercats faithful get to see an opening-round win.

The Gators have proven to be a very strong team the last couple of seasons, but as is often the case in the country you need your best teams on the floor for the majority of the season to be a real force. This one could go right down to the wire. The Supercats will start favourites at home, but don't be surprised if the Gators cause an upset. Enjoy the opening round, the fun starts now!

Sunbury vs Bulleen	Sat 8pm	Boardman Stadium
Latrobe City vs Blackburn	Sat 8pm	Latrobe Leisure Traralgon
Melton vs Keilor	Sat 8pm	Melton Basketball Stadium
Chelsea vs Western Port	Sat 8pm	Patterson River Stadium
Warrnambool vs Melbourne Uni	Sat 8pm	The Arc
Warrandyte vs Keysborough	Sat 8:30pm	Warrandyte Sports Complex
Geelong vs Shepparton	Sun 2pm	The Geelong Arena

