

Australasia's Best Sporting Team 2023: Penrith Panthers

Platinum Asset Management (Platinum) and GAIN LINE Analytics (GAIN LINE), are pleased to present their analysis on **Australasia's (Australia and New Zealand) Best Sporting Team (ABST) 2023**, and to announce that the **Penrith Panthers** National Rugby League team have won the award, having won the most recent three Premierships in a row. The team is widely credited with having one of the outstanding talent development and retention programs in the country, which is reflected in their outcomes.

Matt Cameron, Panthers Rugby League CEO, said *"On behalf of everyone at Penrith Panthers, we are extremely proud of our recent success. I'd like to pay tribute to our head coach Ivan Cleary, whose exceptional leadership has truly eased the path for everyone's role on the team. Our team is youthful in terms of player age, yet our success has allowed them to mature within the game, understanding the essential elements needed to achieve it. Our first grade team stands as a testament to meticulous planning, robust development strategies, and the vital attribute of patience exhibited by our senior administrators. It's crucial for us to maintain our resolve. We're fortunate to have a steadfast board and supportive senior management who've backed every step of our journey"*.

The club nominated 'Panthers on the Prowl' to receive an A\$10,000 grant from Platinum in recognition of their success. Panthers on the Prowl works to provide meaningful education and healthy development opportunities for students in the wider Penrith area who are at risk of disengaging from school.

Runners-up were A-League Mens' current Premiers, **Melbourne City**, who have won the last three premierships (regular season league) and the 2021 championship. They are part of City Football Group, which also owns English champions, Manchester City.

In third place came last year's winners, **Crusaders**, who won an incredible seventh title in a row, but missed out on winning ABST with more weight to win-loss record than outcomes in knock-out matches.

In fourth place came **UNSW Wests Magpies**, men's water polo team, adding the 2023 title to wins in 2019 and 2022 (COVID wiped out 2020 and 2021). They have won six of the last eight competitions. The Australian Water Polo leagues drive national team success. These four teams are among thirteen 2023 competition winners in the Top 25 showing how hard it is to win ABST.

In fifth place overall, and the top female team were **Adelaide Crows AFLW**, who topped this year's ladder for the fourth time in six seasons, having won two premierships in that time. This year's top 25 contains ten female teams, including three AFLW teams. Over 40% of the teams in the analysis are now female. **Brisbane Lions** had both their male and female teams in the Top 25, including the new AFLW champions.

Since 2019, ABST has been an annual award over rolling five-year periods, with previous winners **Melbourne Storm** (NRL) in 2019 and 2020, and **Sydney FC** (A-League Men's) in 2021. Crusaders won the inaugural 2018 award, which was a 25-year study.

Our annual analysis looks at every game in Australasian sporting competitions conducting a home/away or equivalent competition with Australian teams. Rankings consider rolling five-year outcomes (2019-2023), for 21 competitions, including 10 women's leagues, and unisex esports, covering over 8,400 individual matches.

ABST evolved from Platinum and GAIN LINE working together and brings an analytical approach to understanding how relationships within teams ('cohesion') impact outcomes. This is often overlooked as conventional analysis tends to study talent and leadership. ABST seeks to measure and recognise success while emphasising that the way a team is built is critical. Along with supporting good causes, a goal is to drive conversations about greatness, reward success and unearth some hidden gems.

Douglas Isles, Head of Investment at Platinum, commented *"GAIN LINE's theories on cohesion continue to resonate with my understanding of the strength of Platinum's investment team. In parallel with the sporting context, there are countless examples in the corporate world, where cohesion, or lack of it, determines outcomes. ABST recognises sporting excellence while supporting great causes and is an opportunity to make a difference by following up on the work we have done on ourselves"*.

For the criteria and results of the top 25 overall, top 3 by sport and top 3 by state/country, please see attached appendix.



Source: Penrith Panthers

APPENDIX

Top 25

Rank	2022 Rank	Team	Gender	Competition	Location	ABST Score
1	4	Penrith Panthers	M	NRL	NSW	3.339
2	2	Melbourne City	M	A League Men	VIC	3.262
3	1	Crusaders	M	Super Rugby	NZ	2.899
4	13	UNSW Wests	M	AWL Men's	NSW	2.850
5	9	Adelaide Crows	F	AFLW	SA	2.604
6	-	Sydney Kings	M	NBL	NSW	2.602
7	5	Melbourne Demons	F	AFLW	VIC	2.576
8	12	Brisbane Lions	F	AFLW	QLD	2.521
9	6	Sydney FC	F	A League Women	NSW	2.478
10	-	Perth Scorchers	M	BBL	WA	2.424
11	14	Chiefs Esports Club	O	LCO/eSports	NSW	2.398
12	-	Adelaide Strikers	F	WBBL	SA	2.389
13	19	Brisbane Lions	M	AFL	QLD	2.358
14	-	Western Australia	M	Sheffield Shield	WA	2.255
15	20	CBR Brave	M	AIHL	ACT	2.254
16	-	Tasmanian Tigers	F	WNCL	TAS	2.126
17	23	Blues	M	Super Rugby	NZ	2.052
18	11	Melbourne Boomers	F	WNBL	VIC	2.051
19	7	Sydney Sixers	M	BBL	NSW	2.025
20	-	Chiefs	M	Super Rugby	NZ	1.977
21	15	NSW Waratahs	F	Super Rugby W	NSW	1.975
22	-	Collingwood Magpies	M	AFL	VIC	1.944
23	8	Melbourne Storm	M	NRL	VIC	1.915
24	21	West Coast Fever	F	Netball	WA	1.860
25	-	Sydney Sirens	F	AWIHL	NSW	1.844

2023 Award

As part of the Australasia's Best Sporting Team and the team cohesion work between Platinum Asset Management and GAIN LINE Analytics, Platinum will award A\$10,000 to this year's winning team, Penrith Panthers to donate to a worthwhile cause of their choice. The club has chosen to support 'Panthers on the Prowl'.

Penrith Panthers are a professional rugby league football team based in Penrith. Built on a foundation of hard work and determination, Panthers strives to serve its community and deliver excellence on and off the field. The Panthers have a rich history in the NRL and have experienced premiership success on five occasions, winning titles in 1991, 2003, 2021, 2022 and 2023.

Penrith Panthers website: <https://www.penrithpanthers.com.au/>

Panthers on the Prowl works to provide meaningful education and healthy development opportunities for students in the wider Penrith area who are at risk of disengaging from school. Our programs are specifically designed and targeted at improving resilience, self-esteem and levels of physical and mental health for our young people. We achieve our aims through explicit teaching, social skill development and the modelling of positive connected relationships that actively promote and address' harm prevention and the minimisation of child and youth developmental health-risk factors.

Charity website: <https://panthersontheprowl.com.au/>

Background

Australasia's Best Sporting Team was designed to start a new conversation about greatness by bringing an analytical approach to debates such as which football code is the best of all, or how historic teams might fare today. The primary aim is to help those in need, by rewarding success, whilst unearthing some hidden gems. ABST originally started as a research project at GAIN LINE Analytics in trying to define a truly successful team. This appealed to Platinum given the body of work we have done with GAIN LINE on our own team cohesion.

In 2018, Platinum Asset Management, in conjunction with GAIN LINE Analytics, conducted a huge statistical analysis of 14 sports over 25 years and determined that the Crusaders rugby team, based in Christchurch, New Zealand were Australasia's Best Sporting Team over that period. Since 2019, Platinum has presented an annual award to the team that is at the top of its game, achieving the best outcome over the most recent rolling five-year period. The basic principles are the same, but reflect excellence over shorter, yet still meaningful, periods. The goal continues to be to help those in need, whilst recognising success. It has been won by Melbourne Storm (NRL, 2019-20), Sydney FC (A-League Men's, 2021) and Crusaders in 2022.

This annual award recognises the evolving sporting landscape, the emergence of new competitions, and the rise of women's sport.

Methodology

The period of observation for the 2023 award is 2019-2023. Every game in every sport in Australasia that conducts an ongoing home/away or equivalent competition that included Australian teams has been analysed subject to the competition meeting specific criteria. More than 8,400 individual match results are in the dataset, including almost 1,900 from the 2023 seasons.

To be considered for the award a team must have played in each of the last five seasons, with discretion around COVID impacts. For each team in each competition, their win/loss record is looked at season by season, along with their competition position. More recent years are weighted more highly. Win-loss record weights higher than position. This recognises consistency over seasons as opposed to the one-off nature of finals.

For each of measures, a Z-Score assesses relative raw performance within competitions and thus enables comparison across competitions.

An adjustment reflects competition stability over the last 10 years to place performance in context. Stable competitions are harder to perform well in consistently as player trading cycles impact on competitiveness.

173 eligible teams are ranked by adjusted Z-Scores, producing a definitive list of Australasia's Best Sporting Teams over the period. To be the best team in a sport over a prolonged period requires dedication, endurance, excellence and cohesion. To be the best overall, is a step beyond.

The following leagues were considered. They all currently exist and have done continuously for at least five years in a full league format (as opposed to carnival). They are stipulated to be the top tier in Australian sport. Any NZ-based teams playing in combined Australia/NZ leagues (such as Super Rugby) are included, thus creating an Australasian based ranking. Of the 21 competitions, there are nine occasions with both a male and a female competition, including short and longer form cricket.

Eligible competitions

ABL: Australian Baseball League (Men's)
AFL: Men's Australian Football League
AFLW: Women's Australian Football League
A League Men: Men's Football (Soccer)
A League Women: Women's Football (Soccer)
AWL Men's: Australian Water Polo League (Men's)
AWL Women's: Australian Water Polo League (Women's)
AIHL: Men's Ice Hockey
AWIHL: Women's Ice Hockey
BBL: Men's Big Bash Cricket
WBBL: Women's Big Bash Cricket
NBL: Men's Basketball
WNBL: Women's National Basketball League
Netball: Women's Netball League
NRL: National Rugby League
NRL W: National Women's Rugby League
Super Rugby: Men's Rugby International Provincial Competition
Super W: Women's Rugby Union.
Sheffield Shield: Men's Long form Cricket
WNCL: Women's National Cricket League
LCO: League of Legends Circuit Oceania (was Oceanic Pro League)

Additional Data

The top 25 in 2023 includes teams from 18 of the 21 eligible competitions with ten women's teams, from eight leagues, in this list of top performers. As previously forecast, women's sport has grown substantially in recent years with 95 female franchises in our survey, up from 84 last year (70 meeting the qualifying criteria) and 118 men's (100 qualify). The WNBL has the teams with the longest tenure in women's sport.

Results are based on all competitions that were completed by 3 December 2023.

Top 3 by Sport

	1 st	2 nd	3rd
AFL	Adelaide Crows (female)	Melbourne Demons (female)	Brisbane Lions (female)
Baseball*	Brisbane Bandits	Adelaide Bite	Perth Heat
Basketball	Sydney Kings (male)	Melbourne Boomers (female)	Southside Flyers (female)
Cricket	Perth Scorchers (male)	Adelaide Strikers (female)	Western Australia (male)
e-sports*	Chiefs	Dire Wolves	Mammoth
Ice Hockey	CBR Brave (male)	Sydney Sirens (female)	Melbourne Ice (female)
Netball*	West Coast Fever	NSW Swifts	Melbourne Vixens
Rugby League	Penrith Panthers (male)	Melbourne Storm (male)	South Sydney Rabbitohs (male)
Rugby Union	Crusaders (male)	Blues (male)	Chiefs (male)
Soccer	Melbourne City (male)	Sydney FC (female)	Melbourne Victory (female)
Water Polo	UNSW Wests Magpies (male)	Sydney University Lions (male)	Fremantle Marlins (female)

*Baseball is male only, Netball is female only, and e-sports is unisex.

Top 3 by State

	1 st	2 nd	3rd
ACT	CBR Brave (M, Ice Hockey)	Brumbies (M, Rugby U)	Canberra Raiders (M, Rugby L)
NSW	Penrith Panthers (M, Rugby L)	UNSW Wests Magpies (M, WPolo)	Sydney Kings (M, Basket.)
QLD	Brisbane Lions (F, AFL)	Brisbane Lions (M, AFL)	Brisbane Heat (F, cricket)
SA	Adelaide Crows (F, AFL)	Adelaide Strikers (F, Cricket)	Port Adelaide (M, AFL)
TAS	Tasmanian Tigers (F, Cricket)	Hobart Hurricanes (M, Cricket)	Tasmania (M, Cricket)
VIC	Melbourne City (M, Soccer)	Melbourne Demons (F, AFL)	Melbourne Boomers (F, Basket.)
WA	Perth Scorchers (M, Cricket)	Western Australia (M, Cricket)	West Coast Fever (F, Netball)
New Zealand	Crusaders (M, Rugby U)	Blues (M, Rugby U)	Chiefs (M, Rugby U)

Honour Roll

The historic winners and top placed teams in the previous editions are as follows (female in red)

	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018 (25yr study)
Winner	Crusaders	Sydney FC (Male)	Melbourne Storm	Melbourne Storm	Crusaders
Runner-Up	Melbourne City	Crusaders	Crusaders	Crusaders	Brisbane Broncos
3 rd Place	Geelong Cats	Sydney Sixers	Sydney FC (Male)	NSW Breakers	Geelong Cats
4 th Place	Penrith Panthers	Melbourne Storm	NSW Breakers	Sydney FC (Male)	Fremantle Mariners
5 th Place	Melbourne Demons	Sydney FC (Female)	Richmond Tigers	Hurricanes	NSW Breakers

Charities supported

2022 Child Cancer Foundation (NZ)
 2021 Sydney FC Powerchair football team via the Sydney FC Foundation
 2020 Starlight Children's Foundation
 2019 Leukaemia Foundation
 2018 Proceeds used to seed a Crusaders Player Welfare Charitable Trust