

THE Geelong Falcons will travel to the Bendigo region twice in the first month of next year's TAC Cup season.

The 2013 draw has been finalised, with the Falcons first match being played on Easter Saturday at Epsom Huntly Reserve against the Murray Bushrangers - as part of a double header opening featuring the Bendigo Pioneers and North Ballarat Rebels.

The Falcons return to Bendigo's famous Queen Elizabeth Oval a fortnight later to take on the Pioneers.

Splitting that journey up the Calder Highway is a trip down to Warrnambool in round two to take on the Rebels at the Reid Oval on April 7. In the corresponding match last season, the Rebels won a thriller by two points.

The Falcons have been scheduled four matches on Simonds Stadium next year and will also play home games at Werribee's Avalon Oval and Craigieburn as part of the competition.

Two of their home matches at Simonds Stadium – against the Northern Knights on May 4 and versus the Oakleigh Chargers on July 6 – will be played as double headers with Geelong's VFL side.

Their other games in Geelong are against the Eastern Ranges (June 15) and Calder Cannons (August 8).

The TAC Cup finals begin on the weekend of August 31 and September 1.

After reaching the semi-final stage in 2012 under first year coach Paul Hood, the Falcons will be aiming to continue their finals record to 11 straight appearances.

Meanwhile, the Falcons' Hampden-based and Geelong squads have completed their first block of pre-season training with about 80 hopefuls still trying out for a spot on next year's list.

They will resume in mid-January.

Brad Green