

Werribee feels the pain of twin defeats

Werribee Devils have endured a gut-wrenching weekend in Big V division 1 women's basketball.

The Devils suffered two narrow losses to fall to 1-3 after four games.

On Saturday night, Werribee played catch up most of the way, eventually suffering a 63-54 home defeat to Warrnambool Mermaids.

The Devils were behind the eight ball after a lacklustre second period in which they were out-scored 20-10.

They were able to hang in the game, but could never bridge the gap, despite the best efforts of import Alyssa Bennett, who had 14 points and four rebounds, and Georgia Tauschke, with 12 points and five rebounds.

On Sunday, Werribee had a chance to atone for the loss, this time starting strongly and fading late in a 71-64 loss to Casey Cavaliers away at Casey Stadium.

The Devils looked the goods at half-time, leading by six, but they fell away in the second

half, out-scored by 13 in the third and fourth periods.

Bennett again was the star attraction for the Devils with 21 points and seven rebounds.

Daniella Pisano, with 12 points and four assists, and Sam Moodie, with 11 points and 12 rebounds, were the other Devils standouts.

In the men's championship, Werribee Devils went down 109-95 to the Hume City Broncos at Eagle Stadium on Saturday night.

The Broncos finished the game on an 18-4 run to consign the Devils to their second loss in three games.

Import Konor Kulas filled it up for Werribee with 30 points and 12 rebounds.

Bryan Nagy, with 16 points and four rebounds, Deng Chan, 15 points, and Paul Elderkin, 14 points, were the other leading scorers for the Devils.



Import Alyssa Bennett has found her groove with the Werribee Devils. (Damijan Janevski)

Lance Jenkinson



IN THE DOGHOUSE

■ Shane Sexton, talent manager at the Western Jets for the past 18 years, will finish up at the end of this month. Shane has spent nearly 30 years with AFL Victoria and has had an enormous influence on football in the west at the under-age level. The Jets' program has had its critics, me included, over the years and Shane has certainly had strong opinions about the success and direction of the program. It is a very difficult job, as the under-age program is a very emotive area dealing with young men and women and their futures. I commend Shane for his dedication and patience, and wish him well in his retirement.

■ Werribee Football Club finally gets the chance to show off the bright new \$11.75 million Avalon Airport Oval this Saturday night. The vision of the club's board a decade ago and years of hard work by many people will be rewarded when a Werribee team exits the new changerooms and takes to the oval. The past few weeks in particular have been challenging for the staff, as have the past 18 months overall. The club started the season with a nail-biting loss to Geelong at Torquay on Easter Sunday. It was a gutsy effort in its first game as a non-aligned AFL club for nearly 20 years.

■ The role of club boards is often talked about only when a crisis strikes – and then it is usually in a derogatory manner. Western Bulldogs president Peter Gordon is a good case in point. In the aftermath of the premierships win in 2016, he could do no wrong in the eyes of red, white and blue followers. Had he walked on water, no one wearing a Bulldogs' premierships cap or T-shirt would have been surprised. Lately, though, he has been pilloried on social media as an aloof, egomaniacal control freak. That, incidentally, is not the Peter Gordon I know. People who give their time to boards are on a hiding to nothing. It is time the rank and file stepped back and appreciated the time given and the calibre of people involved. And remember they do it for \$0,000,000. Their payment is the success of the club on and off the field, just as it is for you and me.

■ Local footy kicks off this weekend and I want to wish all teams good luck for the 2018 season. While I am not involved as a broadcaster, I will be keeping readers up to date on all the news from around the clubs.

Kevin Hillier

Any news, let me know on email kevin@howdypartnersmedia.com.au. Follow me on Twitter @KevinHillier, plus check out the Howdy Partners Media website as well.



Hoppers Crossing striker Jason Hayne with a unique goal celebration. (Damijan Janevski)

Late loss shakes Reds

By Lance Jenkinson

A five-minute lapse late in the game has seen Hoppers Crossing miss out on maximum points in a 2-2 draw with Western Suburbs in the Football Federation Victoria men's state league 1 at Ralph Reserve on Saturday.

The Reds led by two goals late in the second half courtesy of star recruit Jason Hayne, but they coughed up the lead when Suburbs substitute Fernando Nunez played the role of the home side hero with a double of his own.

Reds coach Shaun Barbara left the ground with a hollow feeling, knowing his side had dominated large chunks of the game, particularly in the first half.

"After the first half and going 1-0 up at the break and putting in a really good performance, we're probably not entirely happy with a draw to be fair," he said.

Eyeing off a second maximum points game in as many weeks after being awarded a default victory for Sydenham Park playing a suspended player in round one, Hoppers Crossing

appeared on track to do so at half-time. But the half-time whistle did halt its momentum.

While Hayne was first to find the back of the net in the second half to double the Reds half-time lead, his team also began to play more conservatively and gave Suburbs a bit more possession in deeper areas.

Suburbs took full advantage and their pressure eventually turned into goal and they were able to salvage a point through Nunez.

"We spoke at half-time that we didn't have to go and chase the game because we were 1-0 up, so to pick the right moments when to exploit them and try to go forward.

"Whether that's a little bit lost in translation or we started to be a little bit too conservative was probably one of those things," he said.

Hayne, a new acquisition, has been on target for Hoppers Crossing. The former Altona Magic frontman scored two goals against Point Cook in the FFA Cup over Easter and another two against Suburbs.

"He's proven to be very clinical around the 18-yard box," Barbara said.

When Hoppers Crossing was on top in the game, it was the likes of midfielders Simon Tolti, Matthew Scott and Daniel Sweeney, and full-backs Kyoungjin Jeong and Dane Garbett who provided plenty of drive.

Barbara refused to pinpoint individuals for praise on this occasion, saying it was an impressive effort all round.

Hoppers Crossing will face the highly rated Geelong at Grange Reserve on Saturday.

In state league 3, Point Cook lost 2-1 to Moreland United at Saltwater Reserve. Tapiwanashe Munyanyiwa scored for the Jets in the second half, but United did its damage in the first 45 minutes for a two goal lead.

In state league 4, Truganina Hornets romped to a 5-1 win over Golden Plains at Bannockburn Recreation Precinct. Idle Elmi fired in a double for the Hornets, while captain Federico Rossini, Abdullahi Salad and Giorgio Torelli also got on the scoresheet.

In state league 5, Paul Dickie scored for West Point, but his team went down 2-1 to the Keilor Wolves at Arndell Park Reserve.

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