

Devils' double delight improves ranking

Werribee Devils have catapulted back into the top half of the ladder after its best weekend of the Big V basketball women's division 1 season so far.

The Devils won both games on a double header slate to jump from third-last and into sixth on the standings.

On Saturday night, Werribee was far too good for the Hawthorn Magic, victorious 80-59 at Eagle Stadium.

The Devils backed up a day later to beat Whittlesea Pacers 64-56 on their home court.

It extended the Devils winning streak to three games.

Import Alyssa Bennett had a major say for the Devils against Hawthorn, posting 19 points, 11 rebounds and three steals.

Sam Moodie, with 17 points and seven rebounds, and Jessica Slade, with 15 points and eight rebounds, were strong offensively for the Devils, while Daniella Pisano impressed with seven points and nine assists.

Werribee kept its momentum going on

its trip to Whittlesea on Sunday. Price was at the forefront for the Devils, posting 25 points and five assists off the bench, including three three-pointers.

The Devils will be seeking to keep the streak alive when they host second-placed Casey Cavaliers at Eagle Stadium on Sunday.

In the men's state championship, Werribee Devils had an impressive 105-91 win on the road over Keilor Thunder.

Konor Kulas was lethal for the Devils with 42 points to go with 10 rebounds.

Deng Chan double doubled with 15 points and 10 rebounds, while Mark Berezdecky had a big influence off the bench with 16 points, eight rebounds and three assists.

The Devils have moved up to eighth on the ladder ahead of an important double header weekend, which sees them play Hume City Broncos away on Saturday night and Knox Raiders at home on Sunday.

Lance Jenkinson



Werribee Devils guard Daniella Pisano plays strong defence on a driving Whittlesea Pacers forward Giulia Dinunzio. (Mark Wilson)



IN THE DOGHOUSE

■ Is football in trouble? Low scoring, high injury tolls, skills of the game on the decline, food too expensive and match-day experiences are being questioned. Is this the same code that boasts increasing participation numbers, television and radio ratings for which media companies are paying millions, record-breaking attendance numbers and more coverage in space and time than in the history of the game? Yes, it is that same code. By the way, the game is called Australian Rules football, not AFL. Is the game in trouble? Yes and no. It is in great danger of disappearing into its own analytical chasm (if you get my drift) because the journos writing about the game are far outnumbered by journos writing about the game's controversy of the code. Most of that controversy is manufactured to fill papers and internet sites and ensure those journos have radio and television spots to fill.

■ Respected football journo Rohan Connolly spoke of this crisis on our new weekly podcast Ruck 'n Roll (available free on mypodcasthouse.com). His view is that there are problems, but they are not insurmountable – and should be addressed over a period of time, not just after one dodgy round of games. Today's football fan apparently wants more goals, yet some of the most memorable games I have ever been to had low scores. An avalanche of goals is not necessarily the perfect formula for entertainment; it makes a good highlights reel, but not always a good spectacle on the day. The same applies to the speed of the game, especially if the kicking skills are not spot on. Speed can just make for a game in which turning the ball over to the opposition is done with monotonous regularity, something spectators loathe.

■ It was great to see Matty Boyd back at Avalon Airport Oval last Saturday, even though it was strange to see him in Collingwood colours. The 2016 premiership player is part of the Pies' coaching staff and is loving his role in the development of young players. Boyd noted the enormous changes at Chirnside Park, where he played 31 games before cementing his spot for nearly 300 AFL games. Non-aligned VFL clubs such as Werribee, Williamstown and Port Melbourne are offering young players golden opportunities that should be acknowledged and encouraged financially by the game itself.

Kevin Hillier

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Werribee forward Navi Singh found the back of the net for the second time this season. (Damjan Janevski)

Road trip joy for Tigers

By Lance Jenkinson

With sketchy home form to start the season, Werribee simply had to turn a road game into a victory in Hockey Victoria men's Vic League 2.

The Tigers had to travel more than an hour to do so, but came away with a confidence-boosting 2-0 win over Croydon Ranges at Yarra Valley Grammar on Saturday.

Tigers assistant coach Jayden Street said the team was happy with a job well done.

"Going into the game 1-2, we really needed to make sure we left there with the points," he said. "Driving all the way out to Croydon, it was nice to come away with the points."

The Tigers could ill afford to drop this one after losing their opening two home games.

"The two losses that we had were both home games and were both 2-1 results," Street said.

"We were in them for the majority of the game ... we just had to work on our finishing a little bit and put the score on the board.

"I didn't think we were playing bad hockey at all – we just needed to capitalise on our opportunities."

Werribee hardly put a foot wrong against Croydon.

The Tigers were stingy in defence, keeping a clean sheet, and did what they needed to do to secure the points in attack.

It was the work of the defence that won the day.

Tigers goalkeeper Aaron Durajski was impenetrable.

"Everything that came his way, he kept it out," Street said. "They had about half a dozen short corners and he managed to keep every single one of them out."

"He keeps us in plenty of games. He's a real key to our defence and sets up everyone in front of him and that's why we don't concede a lot of goals."

Captain Sam Huxtable and forward Navi Singh scored for Werribee.

Singh's goal was the final touch on a spectacular Tigers team play.

"The goal he scored was a fantastic team goal – one-touch passes right the way up the field," Street said. "He was in the right spot and got a nice little tap in goal," Street said.

"Navi's quite skilful and he knows how to find the way to the back of the net. He's added another layer to our forward line."

Will it be home sweet home when Werribee returns to President's Park on Saturday to face St Bede's?

The Tigers are desperate to finally notch their first win in front of their home fans in 2018.

"St Bede's are always up and around us in the league, so we expect it to be another tough game," Street said.

"We haven't got points at our ground yet, so the boys will be putting the hard yards in on the training track to make sure we rectify that and don't let teams come to our ground and leave with our points."