

Defeats derail Devils' drive to finals

Werribee Devils have been thrown a curveball in Big V women's division 1 basketball.

The Devils, seemingly cruising towards the play-offs on the back of a six-game winning streak, hit a couple of road blocks on a double-header weekend.

Their winning run came to an end on Saturday night with flat 66-48 loss to Hawthorn Magic – but there was thought to be no need for panic after a rare blemish.

Another loss, on Sunday, this time by a 91-81 scoreline to Whittlesea Pacers at Eagle Stadium, heightened the cause for concern.

The losses put Werribee's spot in the finals under threat because both were to sides around them in the standings.

In the defeat to Hawthorn, the Devils could not get going offensively.

Aside from import Alyssa Bennett, who scored 23 points to go with 13 rebounds, the starting unit struggled to find the bottom of the basket.

Jessy Price was the Devils' only other double-figure scorer with 10 points, but she produced them with an inefficient three-from-18 from the field.

Price was not alone as the Devils' shooting woes seeped into any player not named Bennett.

Werribee was much better offensively against Whittlesea, but had the opposite issue – leaking too many points.

Georgia Tauschke led the way for the Devils with 26 points and seven rebounds, while the consistent Bennett put up 21 points and 11 rebounds.

The Devils (10-8) will square off with title

favourite Mildura Heat (15-2) in a blockbuster at Eagle Stadium on Sunday.

In men's state championship, Werribee Devils suffered a third straight loss, going down 96-83 to Hawthorn Magic at the Boroondara Sports Complex on Saturday night.

Imports Konor Kulas and Bryan Nagy performed to their usual high standards.

Kulas had a well-rounded stat line of 24 points, nine rebounds, three steals and two blocks, while Nagy worked tirelessly for 16 points, six rebounds, five steals and two blocks.

Tyrone Remy and Mangor Manuer provided 11 points apiece off the bench.

The Devils (5-12) face second-placed Eltham Wildcats (13-5) away on Sunday.

Lance Jenkinson



IN THE DOGHOUSE

■ Ben Jolley, a warrior for the Williamstown Football Club for many years, last weekend broke Troy West's games record for the club. Jolley led his side to a 30-point win over Collingwood in front of the Seagull faithful. Jolley has done it all in the blue and gold, winning the Gerry Callahan Medal for club best and fairest four times and the Ron James Memorial Trophy nine times and leading the club to premiership glory in 2015. He is an inspirational leader, like many before him at Point Gellibrand, and his name deservingly ranks with the likes of Troy West, Terry Wheeler, Saade Ghazi, Ian Rickman and Barry Round, to name but a few. No doubt he will join them in the Williamstown Hall of Fame in the future.

■ Scott Mizzi this weekend will play his 450th WRFL game – an amazing feat. Starting at Altona as a seven year old in the under-9s, Scott has enjoyed a lot of football at several clubs – Sunshine Heights, Deer Park and, currently, with Laverton Magpies. His mother Janine was on the WRFL board for a number of years and the family is entrenched in footy in the west. It is a great milestone, one I hope he can savour.

■ Former Bulldogs and Werribee star Simon Atkins' success as a coach continues with his charges at St Bernard's taking out the Associated Catholic Colleges championship against Whitefriars last week by a point. "Axe" loves his involvement with the school, so this back-to-back triumph rates pretty highly. The school has had a very impressive AFL graduation list over the years, including Justin and Simon Madden, Matthew Lloyd, Mitch Wallis, Tom Liberatore, Jude Bolton, Joe Daniher, Dane Swan and emerging Swans star Ben Ronke. Xavier O'Halloran, current Western Jets captain, is set to join that list next year.

■ Sadly I note the passing of former Bulldogs player and Williamstown premiership player Mark Cross. The Bulldogs past players paid tribute to Mark last weekend with a presentation to his widow, Jill, and sons Joel, Shaun and Kane. Mark had a Midas touch with premierships, starting with the 1976 flag with the Seagulls, then being involved as either player or coach with four Red Cliffs victories in the Sunraysia league and then a three-peat with Mildura Imps. He also got Melbourne to two grand finals in the early '90s as reserves coach.

Kevin Hillier

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Caleb Sullivan gets boot to ball for Werribee Districts. (Damjan Janevski)

Tigers get 'half a result'

By Lance Jenkinson

It was a game that no side deserved to lose – and neither side did.

Werribee Districts and Sunshine Kangaroos played out a thrilling draw in Western Region Football League division 1 at Soldiers Reserve on Saturday.

Tigers coach Chris Gilham was left flat after game ended at 58 apiece, but he could not argue that it was not the right result.

"It was a bit of a hollow feeling when you draw and not win, but we'll take the two points and move on," he said.

"It was a neck-and-neck game. We had the scoring end early and had a little lead at the break, and they had it second quarter and came back at us ... it was the same in the second half.

"We defended quite well, as they did, against the wind.

"It's hollow because we were never behind in the game ... but I'd say it was a fair result because they were coming hard at the end."

For Werribee Districts, it brought an end to its two-game losing streak.

The Tigers were coming off heavy losses to top two sides Deer Park and Spotswood and needed to respond.

"We played two quality oppositions, so we weren't getting too upset," Gilham said.

"We were showed up a little bit by Deer Park, who are the front runners of the competition and were too good for us.

"We showed signs that we're good enough to compete with these teams, but we need to put it together for four quarters.

"That was the pleasing thing about today – we were able to string together four competitive quarters and get half a result."

Trent Lee was at the forefront of all that was good for Werribee Districts in the draw.

The onballer played with controlled aggression, won the lion's share of contested ball for his side and was a threat offensively.

"He plays with a real hard edge," Gilham said. "He got us surging forward quite a few times.

"When there was a tackle to be made or a collision to be had, he was right there."

Werribee Districts moved up to third on the ladder.

The Tigers will take to the road on Saturday for what could be a danger game against unpredictable Albion.

"We're not going to drop our guard with Albion – we've got a lot of respect for them,"

Gilham said. "They're hard to beat at home and their best five players are as good as any team in the comp.

"They probably shaped the final five last year, so they're definitely dangerous. We've got to make sure we're ready to go."

Elsewhere in division 1, Hoppers Crossing was tight defensively in holding St Albans to just five goals in a 26-point win.

The Warriors remain fifth, level on wins with fourth-placed Altona.

Wyndhamvale had a day to forget, going goal-less in a 114-point loss to Spotswood.

In division 2, Manor Lakes won a thriller by two points over Newport Power to move up to fourth.

Point Cook continued on its merry way with a 54-point win over Albanvale.

The Bulldogs face a showdown with ladder leader Yarraville-Seddon at Saltwater Reserve this Saturday.

In division 3, Wyndham Suns remain undefeated after a 43-point win over Sunshine Heights.

The shock of the day was Point Cook Centrals' stunning 120-point loss at the hands of Tarneit, with the premiership contenders failing to register a goal.

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