

Warriors keep the heat on

Hoppers Crossing made it nine games in a row without defeat in Western Region Football League division 1 thanks to a 73-point mauling of the Sunshine Kangaroos at Hogans Road Reserve on Saturday.

The Warriors remain in hot pursuit of a top-three finish and a finals double chance.

The fourth-placed Warriors are two points behind a trio of teams – ladder leader Deer Park, Spotswood and Werribee Districts.

Hoppers Crossing came out breathing fire against Sunshine.

The Warriors kicked nine of the opening 10 goals of the match to take an unassailable 55-point lead into half-time.

They cruised to victory in the second half, despite Sunshine putting up a bit more resistance.

Braden Ferrari had a day out for Hoppers Crossing, kicking five goals.

Others to impress for the Warriors were Chris Endres, Ashlin Brown and Aaron Williams, who kicked four goals.

Werribee Districts defeated Wyndhamvale by 47 points. Trent Lee kicked five goals in the Tigers' win.

In division 2, Point Cook played its first match under lights at Saltwater Reserve on Saturday night and was victorious by 21 points over Manor Lakes.

In division 3, Tarneit won a thrilling top-of-the-table clash with Wyndham Suns by four points.

In VAFA division 3, Westbourne Grammarians trounced Manningham Cobras by 94 points.

In the GDFL, Werribee Centrals cruised to a 47-point win over Anakie.

Point Cook will face Braybrook in the inaugural WRFL netball grand final at the VU Community Sports Stadium on Friday night.

Point Cook earned a direct path to the decider after beating North Footscray 44-18 in a semi-final.

Lance Jenkinson

Reds ascend to next level

Hoppers Crossing has secured promotion from the Football Federation Victoria women's state league 2 north-west in style.

The Reds confirmed a top two finish with a typically entertaining 5-1 win over Fitzroy City at Grange Reserve on Sunday.

It was fitting that Reds striker Julia Budiongo-Batota fired in a hat-trick on this day.

Shantay Mena and Mya Moran also found the back of the net for the Reds.

The win means that Hoppers Crossing will feature in women's state league 1 next season.

Lance Jenkinson



IN THE DOGHOUSE

■ Last week I wrote that the AFL was belittling the VFL competition by trialling its experimental rules during VFL home and away games and I stand by that. Werribee and Coburg footy clubs were approached and both agreed to be the guinea pigs in a proper game, which is their call. Both teams sit towards the bottom of the VFL ladder, both are stand-alone VFL teams and both made the most of this opportunity to promote their clubs. The live television exposure was a bonus for the clubs and sponsors and the fact the eyes of the AFL footy world were on the game does not hinder the future prospects of potential draftees such as Sam Collins, Jack Henderson, Keegan Gray or Nick Coughlan. From a spectator point of view, the new rule seemed to have minimal impact on the game but I have no doubt once coaches see it in action, it will open up several new strategies. Whether it is radical enough to make watching two bad teams better, I strongly doubt.

■ Newport Power Football Club's annual sports lunch last Friday was another good event with a very entertaining panel of Jess Duffin, Daniel Wells, Doug Hawkins and Adam Cooney. The 2008 Brownlow Medallist certainly did not hold back on his much talked about departure from Whitten Oval. Suffice to say, he is no fan of Brendan McCarthy or Peter Gordon and the way they handled his exit from the red, white and blue. Jess Duffin is a dual sportsperson playing at the top level in both cricket and football, which is a luxury that probably won't last much longer, even though AFLW is shrinking, or that appears to be the plan.

■ I have expressed my thoughts on the over-zealous growth of women's football before, but to now shrink the elite competition's time frame – while expanding the participants – makes no sense. I agree with Daisy Pearce and others that it makes the competition farcical. As for comparing it to the World Cup, that was one of the most foolish statements I have ever heard. It is too late to go back to square one, but it is not too late to be realistic about the talent pool and the logistics involved to rein in the expansion. The women's game has a bright and lucrative future. Let it evolve naturally. Talk to the people playing the game. They know better than any corporate executive where the game is going, and what the main issues are.

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.



WESTPOINT 

Corner Heaths and Morris Road
Hoppers Crossing Ph: 9749 6444

Web: www.westpointford.com.au

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Theodore Lalakai carries the ball securely for the Werribee Bears. (Damjan Janevski)

Bears back to their best

By Lance Jenkinson

Respect for the jersey, local bragging rights and the easiest possible path to the grand final – it was all on the line for Werribee Bears in NRL Victoria first grade.

The Bears ticked all the boxes in a 52-14 win over Truganina Rabbitohs on the road at Clearwood Drive Reserve on Saturday.

Above all, Bears coach Josh Makiri wanted to see his team show some pride after having their colours lowered in a baffling 50-4 loss to Casey Warriors seven days earlier.

“We got thrashed last week,” Makiri said. “For us this week, we just wanted to put some pride back into the jersey.”

“That was really our objective.”

The sweetener was beating Truganina on the

back of standout performances from Kuros Metuariki, Tevita Pomale and Ben Tuiatua.

There is not yet a full-blown rivalry between the two Wyndham clubs, but there will be in the not too distant future.

The Bears, champions of first grade in the past two seasons, are undoubtedly the top side in Wyndham, but the Rabbitohs are keen to bridge the gap.

“It’s still early in the rivalry,” Makiri said. “It’s turned into a little bit of a rivalry because they’re our neighbours.”

“A lot of players left our club to go there and help start up that club.”

“We still have a good relationship, but everyone loves to get a win over them.”

The icing on the cake for Werribee was that the derby victory secured the first-grade

minor premiership and top ranking for the finals.

That means that if the Bears do lose their semi-final, they will get a second chance.

But they are hellbent on using the win over the Rabbitohs as a springboard for a winning run to end the season.

The Bears will do battle with Waverley-Oakleigh Panthers in the final home-and-away round of the season this Saturday at Haines Drive Reserve.

It will be part of the club’s 10th anniversary celebrations.

“It’s a big weekend for us as a club and our team going forward,” Makiri said.

“There will be a lot of people down there, so we want to put a stamp on that game and get a win before the finals.”