

Werribee keeps stepping up in finals bid

Werribee is refusing to wave the white flag in the Victorian Sub-District Cricket Association. The Tigers keep delivering in cut-throat situations to maintain their mathematical chance of reaching the north-west first XI finals.

For Tigers skipper Tim O'Brien and his teammates, this is familiar territory. "We were in the same position last year," he said. "Every game is a final for us ... if we drop one, we're probably cooked."

Werribee's form is getting stronger the longer the season goes on.

The Tigers were superb in a five-wicket win on the road over finals contender Kew at Victoria Park on Saturday.

Set a target of 213 for victory, the Tigers had a few early hiccups to be 3-56, but finished strongly for a relatively comfortable victory.

Night watchman Jonathan Burton was the

surprise star with the bat for Werribee. Burton was put in late on day one to see the Tigers to stumps and did so brilliantly. But then he batted on into the second day to make 55.

Burton is not a recognised run-scorer for the Tigers, having spent most of his first XI career as a tailender, but his significant batting improvement is starting to have an impact on the field of battle.

"I spoke to him during the week, and said, 'It's a really good opportunity, you've been batting really well, so there's no reason you why you can't pick yourself up a good score here,'" O'Brien said.

"He's very positive and batted beautifully. He didn't play any rash shots, just hit the ball when it was in the zone. It was a pretty mature innings."

Shaun Dean was the other stand-out for Werribee with 73 not out, as the Tigers finished

on 5/214. Dean has played many chanceless innings for Werribee over the years, but this was not one of them.

"There was a couple of shouts with him, definitely a couple of close calls," O'Brien said.

Werribee will host Yarraville in a tantalising two-day game at Chirnside Park starting on Saturday.

Meanwhile, Hoppers Crossing fought hard but was eventually chased down by Brunswick in a low-scoring thriller at Gillon Oval.

The Cats went into the day confident they could defend 129, but the Wicks recovered from 7-74 to reach the target eight down. Brandon Diplock took 4-22 off 12.5 for the Cats.

With their finals hopes dashed, Hoppers Crossing will be playing for pride on its trip to Preston on Saturday.

Lance Jenkinson



Wayne Donaldson and coach Phil Crea are looking forward to Glen Orden's return to the WRFL senior men's ranks. (Damjan Janevski)

Hawks happy to be back

By Lance Jenkinson

Glen Orden has been on a rebuilding mission for the past 12 months in anticipation of a return to senior men's football in the Western Region Football League.

The Hawks will re-enter the competition through division 3, returning in better shape than when they had to pull out of the competition before last season.

Hawks senior coach Phil Crea said the club was focused on building a top side through hard work and the development of young players.

"We don't want a quick fix and buy a premiership," he said. "We want to develop players and pass on a bit of our experience to them and create a good young team."

Crea was thrilled to be offered the coaching position at Glen Orden.

The 49-year-old from Werribee spent six seasons with the Hawks as a player and watched his two sons play at the club.

He wants to see the Hawks thrive in the long term and will leave no stone unturned to ensure he leaves the club in a much better place than he found it.

"It was unexpected," he said of his appointment. "Coaching a club with no players was a bit strange at the start, but full credit to the players that have put up their hands and signed up – because if it wasn't for the players, I wouldn't be coaching."

"It's just exciting rebuilding the club again. We'll put in a good culture and make it an enjoyable place for people to be again."

The time out of the competition was both good and bad for Glen Orden.

Off the field, it allowed the Hawks to balance the books, but on the field it cost them some key players who have not returned.

"It gave the committee and [club president] Peter MacDonald a chance to get rid of a bit of the debt," Crea said.

"It did hurt us a little bit because we lost some players to other clubs that aren't coming back."

"But we're excited now. The proudest moment will definitely be when we get two sides out there."

With a team in the new WRFL women's football competition, anticipated growth in the junior base and the intention to enter a team into the new WRFL netball competition, Glen Orden will serve families better than ever before.

Just like the Hawthorn Hawks in the AFL, Crea wants Glen Orden to be known as the family club.

"We want a good culture off the ground where you can bring your family down and everyone has a good time," he said.

"We want our partners and their kids to be able to come down and watch their other halves play."

"That's our goal – to be a family club and an enjoyable place to be."

Glen Orden will continue to welcome new players and sponsors right up until the start of the season in April.



IN THE DOGHOUSE

■ Kevin Atkinson and Wayne Connor are not names that many Bulldogs supporters of the last few decades would be aware of, but last week both were very rightly made Life Members of the Western Bulldogs. Both men have given years of service to the club in the stats area of the football department. I still see them both at the past players and officials function at home games. The debate about premiership players receiving instant Life Membership is interesting, with Brian Lake the classic example of someone who won three premierships with Hawthorn but wants to be remembered as a Bulldogs Life Member and a Hawks premiership player. That seems right to me. Does Joel Hambling deserve to be a Bulldogs Life member (23 games, 1 premiership)? I think not. Well done to Kevin and Wayne and also Gary Kent, Easton Wood and Simon Dalrymple who were also honoured.

■ The Werribee Park Golf Club won't be hosting the Legends Pro Am this year, having decided to channel the funds into the new members' lounge extension. Last year the club underwrote the event and while it was a success, the board thought the funds best suited to something all members could enjoy. It will be interesting to see how golfers adapt to the proposed rule changes that are being trialled between now and next year. Most are aimed at speeding up the game and making some very convoluted rules more practical and easier to interpret (AFL football please note). It looks very sensible to me.

■ Yarraville Cricket Club sits just outside the six in the senior subbies competition at the moment after a stirring win over Plenty Valley last weekend. Their final three games of the season give them a real chance of playing finals as they play sides below them on the ladder. On Friday February 23rd they will be holding the annual President's luncheon at Peckish @ Yarraville Club in Stephen Street from 12.30. Comedian Dave O'Neil will be holding court with guest speaker Wayne B Phillips. This is the Wayne Phillips from South Australia who played 27 tests and 48 ODI's for Australia, not the Victorian opener. Wayne is a very entertaining speaker with some hilarious stories. Bookings are available through Rod Wood on 0407357 121 or rod.wood@toyota.com.au

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