

Sloppy day, Giant effort

By Lance Jenkinson

Winning has become a habit for Werribee Giants in the Baseball Victoria summer league division 2.

Even when the Giants were playing at nowhere near their best levels, they found ways to improve to 12-1 for the season in a "real sloppy" 7-3 extra-innings win over Port Melbourne Mariners at JL Murphy Reserve on Sunday.

The Giants' grit is a delight for coach John Curnow.

"We're able to hold the teams when we're not playing too well," he said.

Pitching did the job for Werribee after an error-riddled day in the field and a string of wasteful at-bats.

The Giants committed four errors and their batting was disjointed.

"We didn't play their field as well as we do every other field," Curnow said. "They attacked the balls that we hit to them and we stood back and let them play us."

"We also couldn't string the hits together, which is a bit of an issue. We'd get a hit, then two outs and we couldn't do anything."

The positive for Werribee was the superb pitching display by Wes DeJong.

He threw 10 innings, averaging 10.3 pitches per innings, and was a constant thorn in the side of the Mariners batters, who managed only six hits for the game.

"He really battled for us today," Curnow said. "Guys let him down in the field a few times today and he stood up."

"He stayed focused and did his job the whole day, no matter what."

"That's what he does every time he goes out there."

"We've got good confidence whenever he's on the mound that we'll do all right."

DeJong was in total control from the outset.

He mixed up his speeds and pitches and froze the batters with his curveball.

Any time he dropped the curve into the dirt, he had catcher Oliver Box as his insurance policy.

"Wes throws a lot of off speed stuff in the dirt and tries to keep the hitters off balance," Curnow said. "He did a real good job back there, blocking all that."

At 3-3, Andrew Christou got the go-ahead hit in the 11th inning before import Guillermo Salazer closed out the game with an inning in relief at the bottom of the 11th.

Werribee remains one game back of unbeaten Cheltenham Rustlers with another trip to Port Melbourne coming on Thursday night.



Andrew Christou produced a crucial extra-inning hit for Werribee Giants. (Shawn Smits)



IN THE DOGHOUSE

■ The Werribee Cup was run and won in fine style by the favourite Mahamedeis on Sunday, but the Cup day has a long way to go. No one knows that better than Ashley Baker, the club's general manager who now has a template to work with for future Cups. It is one of the hardest jobs in sport in the west and one that comes with some pretty big handbrakes. Baker is working with a shrunken calendar due to the international commitment to the spring carnival and with a race that has lost its place in the pecking order. We all know the cup won by Makybe Diva in 2002 is a very different entity to the version run this past week. Small fields don't mean bad racing but to only have two races with more than seven runners on cup day is very disappointing, especially for the each way punters. Lots of very good work has been done to get the club back its credibility, now its feature race day needs the same.

■ What an amazing weekend of highs and lows for Werribee's sporting Dean brothers. Travis joined an elite group on Friday, being named captain of the Victorian Shield side. The list to have that honour includes Lawry, Harvey, Bright, Cowper, Stackpole, Redpath, Dodemaide and O'Donnell. Travis won the toss and batted but only managed 16 in a big Victorian first innings score. That night a horse he part owns with local sporting identities saluted in race five at Moonee Valley, the 55 Second Classic. The next day his siblings Matt and Shaun – who have been in scintillating batting form with Werribee – both made ducks in the Tigers' first innings score of 209. Talk about the highs and lows.

■ The Dean boys made their inglorious scores in front of a sea of past players gathered at Chirnside Park for their annual day and the presentation of senior XI caps to all players in the club's rich history. The coveted first eleven numbers went to famous names from the inaugural season: Eddie Marriot number 3 behind Dennis Clooney and Eddie Closter. The Combens were there: John (6) Bruce (11) and Frank Melican (9). Favourite son and the club's most famous alumni Merv Hughes was at 65 beside his great mate Rod Harrington (64). There were 239 caps in all, and while it might cost a few dollars to set up, it is a bonding exercise like no other. I think all clubs should embrace the concept.

Kevin Hillier

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Warriors tune up for top two showdown

Point Cook will spend another week atop the Victorian Turf Cricket Association division 3 ladder after a commanding 43-run win over West Newport at Saltwater Reserve.

The Warriors remain two points clear of Sunshine at the top, but those two sides will meet in a mouth-watering two-day clash starting this Saturday to determine which will be the front-runner heading into Christmas.

Point Cook will go into that battle full of confidence after its dismantling of West Newport in the one-dayer on Saturday.

The Warriors produced a solid if unspectacular 9-142 off 40 overs with the bat.

After struggling early to be 5-44, the Warriors recovered through the middle order.

Player-coach Aaron Whear top-scored for Point Cook with 39, while wicketkeeper James Peterson made 27. Sarwan Kumar provided valuable late runs with 18.

It was with the ball that Point Cook took charge. The Warriors routed West Newport for 99 in 37.3 overs.



Gurbaksh Khaira snared four wickets for Point Cook. (Damjan Janevski)

Every Point Cook bowler contributed to the Wests' demise, but none more so than Gurbaksh Khaira, who snared 4-15 off eight. Khaira improved his season tally to 11 wickets at 10.6.

James Doolan was Point Cook's other multiple wicket taker with 2-14.

Point Cook's blockbuster with second-placed Sunshine will take place at Saltwater Reserve over the next two Saturdays.

Second-last Seabrook was no match for Sunshine away at Dempster Park.

The Saints' score of 9-128 was eaten up by Sunshine in just 32 overs.

Leigh Edwards top-scored for Seabrook with 39, while Jake Collins added 23.

Dhavel Patel was the Saints' lone multiple wicket taker with 2-9.

In division 4, Wyndhamvale's total of 8-164 was comfortably chased down by Williamstown Congs at Wyndhamvale South Reserve.

Stephen Williams put the Falcons into a strong position with an electrifying 58 not out off 42 balls, but it was not enough to stop the Congs, who passed the target with seven overs to spare.

In division 2, Werribee Centrals had a six-wicket win over Kingsville at Galvin Park.

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