

Hornsby-Berowra Eagles U13s **Round 2 v Baulkham Hills Hawks**

After a false start before the school holidays where our game was called off, the mighty U13s Eagles were back at Rofe Park for our first hit-out of the year. Everyone knows that Rofe is the home of footy and even though the ground was wet underfoot, the sun was shining and the stage was set for a big clash against Baulkham Hills Hawks.

There was a bit of a new look about our 2023 team. After a bit of doubt as to whether we would be able to field a stand-alone Eagles team we have ended up having our biggest squad ever. We have nine new players in our team! Some of them are returning players in Tyler and Harrison but we have also picked up new recruits from elsewhere. All are keen, skilful and talented and ready to contribute to the awesome group that is the U13s Eagles.

From my view on the sideline, all on my lonesome as the boundary umpire, it was evident a few things had changed this year. Not only did we have new players but there were also new rules. The most obvious being that you were now allowed to kick from the ground! Both teams abused this a little with the match resembling the A-League more than the AFL at times! Maybe the boys were just excited they could finally do it? It may have just been me but the playing field seemed much, much bigger and the gameplay far more serious.

Conditions were hot and steamy as the umpires blew the whistle for the first bounce. The contest was tight from the very beginning with both sides unwilling to give an inch to their opponent. The Hawks had grabbed a solitary goal and went to the first break 8-0.

The Eagles stormed back into contention with a great goal from Josh and a behind to Owen. At half time, the scores were very close with the Hawks holding only a 2 point lead at 9-7.

Things started to open up a bit in the third quarter with the Eagles really spreading their wings with 2 goals to Luke and 1 to Ollie in his debut match. The Hawks had matched us with some goals of their own and held a slim 28-25 lead at the end of the quarter. Could the Eagles kick off the season with a Round 1 win against a quality opposition?

Unfortunately, it wasn't to be. The Hawks ran away with it a bit in the final quarter winning 41-25. They were probably a little more urgent than us and definitely benefited from having a game under their belt. Still, there wasn't much in it at all. We're only going to improve and we weren't far off what looked like a more than decent team in the Hawks.

Our forwards didn't get too many chances but I was impressed with our defenders and mids. In the back third Emmet was strong and the two mad redheads in Charlie and Ronin picked up where they left off last year. A special mention to Josh T who was our last line of defence and did a stunning job repelling the attacking raids of the Hawks. In his first game for the Eagles, Josh looks a great like-for-like replacement for Ben.

Our mids excelled with the classy Tyler leading the way with support from Ollie, Josh H, Henry, Luke and Josh W. There were probably many others I've forgotten too. A great first effort Eagles and we get to do it all again in 2 days against Lane Cove Cats. I'm sure we'll be better for the run and Tim and Nick will have us primed for our first victory of the season.

Report By: Greg Allan

Player of the match - Tyler Stead
Callum Mills Award - Josh Tierney

Baulkham Hills Hawks 41(5.11)
Hornsby-Berowra Eagles 25(4.1)