

MATCH REPORT



HBE UNDER 14 vs WESTERN SYDNEY ALLIANCE
ROUND 3- 28 APRIL 2024
DUKES OVAL

This week's AFL journey took us out to Dukes Oval, Emu Plains in Sydney's west for the clash between the Mighty Hornsby-Berowra Eagles and the oddly named Western Alliance. To me, the Western Alliance sounded like some sort of political splinter group rather than a footy team. I wondered why they wouldn't name their team after an animal or a national footy side like most do? Being the weirdo that I am, I actually looked up "Western Alliance" on Google and they're actually a bank which potentially makes it even worse... Neal actually pointed this out to me on Sunday but I didn't believe him!

Anyway, the drive out was long but really quite easy. We're getting used to trekking around NSW at the Eagles but some of our newer parents must be wondering what they've signed up for! As regular readers of my reports know, I like to give a critique of opposition grounds. Nothing ever compares to the Home of Football - Rofo Park and I always like to make that clear. Having said that though, Dukes Park seemed a good footy oval. Obviously a cricket ground during the summer, it had a nice picket fence, a digital scoreboard and a good playing surface. The surrounding trees and Autumn sunshine gave a real footy feel. It was good to be back,,,

Today's task was not going to be easy. Already, this financial institution loving team looked a strong side plus we were missing a few big names from our line-up. The amount of facial hair in a few of the Alliance's players was also a worrying trend for some of the Eagles supporters. If this game came down to beards, we were already well behind...

After a delayed start we were finally underway. The Eagles were good in the initial stages, being unlucky not to score a few frees for their efforts. Luke took some handy marks and Jake G had some good touches in the opening 5 or so minutes. We were clearing the ball and competing well but the first points of the match went to the Alliance. Following this, a useful defensive clearance from Jake S put Tyler in the clear for one his trademark runs. This was one of many throughout the game. He sent the ball towards our forwards who couldn't complete the deal. Ronin and Jake S were very solid at the back and working hard but even this couldn't stop another Alliance goal just before the break. 15-0 to the Alliance.

Not long into the second quarter, the Eagles were on the board! The ball moved swiftly down from the backs starting from Jake S to Josh H who are forming a great combination already. Josh H shot the ball into our forward line and Augie(from the 12's) took a beautiful mark. He smartly sent the ball back inside to Zac who slotted the ball expertly between the sticks. A fantastic goal which had the Eagles faithful on their feet! The great run continued for our guys with another six pointer, this time from Josh H. Some tidy work from new recruit Ethan in the middle set this one up for us.

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Unfortunately, the Alliance hit back with a soccer through the posts and then another goal shortly after making the score 32-12 at half time. Despite the late goals, it was a much better quarter for our guys. We scored two awesome goals and we were only a couple of behinds from winning the term.

The third quarter was another strong start for Hornsby-Berowra. Some nice play from our backs held out the Alliance on more than a few occasions and the ball started to move up the field. The dynamic Josh H made a scintillating running play and booted the ball through the posts from a distance for another Eagles major! Disappointingly, the Alliance matched this by kicking a goal from a free kick in front. Then they got another and another... They were like a bank in that everytime you seemed to be making some progress you just ended up getting further behind. Maybe I'm not giving them enough credit for their name? It wasn't all bad news for the Eagles though as there was still plenty of good efforts across the park. Not usually back men, guys like Josh W, Lucas, Jack R and Emmett were trying hard in the backs. Josh W's marking skills were still very much on display. Ethan and Josh H continued their nice work in the middle with a lot of handpassing that looked quite classy at times. Luke was also making some strong tackles which resulted in attacking channels for HBE. There were numerous examples of strong work from our boys, we just couldn't turn them into points. 54-18 Alliance.

In the final term, things again started quite well with a powerful forward entry from Josh H and a good second effort from Lucas giving another attacking chance but points evaded us again. This was pretty much the theme of the match as the Alliance made the most of their opportunities whereas we weren't able to despite our efforts. Our backs were tireless, particularly Jake S, who found Luke this time who sent the ball forward but unfortunately again we received nothing in the points department. Final score 75-18 to the Alliance.

The scoreline wasn't pretty but from all reports this was a much improved result and outcome when compared to the previous round. For me, I saw multiple good efforts across the board, often from guys playing out of position. With improved focus at training during the week and some big guns returning there's a lot to look forward to in the next round at home against the Parramatta Goannas.

Coach Tim agreed with this sentiment in his post game wrap-up mentioning that the effort didn't really match the scoreline. He gave special mention to Augie and Jesse from the 12's who were fantastic and valuable for during the tough clash. Unsurprisingly, Tim gave the Players Of The Match to Josh H and Jake S who were absolute standouts today. Callum Mills award went to Zach for a much improved performance. Tim said it was his best game for the club and I thought this was a very accurate assessment. Great work Zach!

See you out at Rofe next Sunday!

Greg Allan

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