

Round 14 Match Report U9s

St Ives Saints U9s v North West Lightning U9s Blue

Acron Oval, St Ives

4/8/24

Conditions were very good at Acron Oval for our clash against St Ives Saints. The rain that had been so constant for such a long time had now left us for a few weeks and we had a dry surface and sunny, still weather. Everything was in place for a fun and exciting morning of footy.

As usual, Acron Oval was a hive of activity as Auskick had just finished for the day. There were a couple of grounds marked out on the Oval and our match was crammed onto the right edge of the park. The actual playing ground that had been marked seemed a lot smaller than the girls had been used to. Oh well, at least it was easier for me to make out the players, especially when compared to the vast stretches of Mike Kenny Oval!

With the tiny pitch, I figured there'd either be a stack of goals or a tight low scoring game today. Hannah got me thinking the former scenario was in store as she booted the first goal for the Lightning within seconds of the opening whistle! She grabbed another not long after some strong scrambling from our other forwards and some great clearing kicks from our mids in Juliet and Iris. Our backs didn't see too much of the ball in the first quarter but when a St Ives player made a rare venture into their forward third, Tilly and the other backs quickly wrapped them up in a fine combined tackle.

Onto the 2nd and our backs that were previously standing around twiddling their thumbs were suddenly in the thick of it. Estella and Margot were busy in the back third and made some strong runs, whilst our other backs worked together to repel the Saints' attack. The match was of a high quality so far, a tough battle with some impressive marking from St Ives starting to feature. Just before the break, the Saints got their first major but our defensive unit had done well to keep them to just just a solitary goal.

It wasn't long and the third quarter was underway and St Ives struck with an early goal. Unfortunately, another followed soon after. The match conditions were becoming very difficult for our Lightning girls as the umpires were reluctant to make any calls whatsoever. Without any stoppages, the game became quite rough and it was hard to get out of our back third. Despite this, our backs continued to work overtime, with Indy making some nice runs and Juliette working hard in support.

We had reached the last term and our coaches Alicia and Nikki were in deep discussion, trying to find the best combination to mount a final assault. The action started and Abba quickly fielded a St Ives kick and found Iris who cleared it well. Indy was also putting in some more of her customary runs but it wasn't enough to stop the points coming from our opponents. There was

plenty of determination from our girls in the middle but with no calls coming from the umpire, play was starting to resemble a WWE Royal Rumble. Charlotte, Juliet, Margot and Hannah were all right amongst it and kept up the fight regardless.

The full time siren blew. We had probably come 2nd on the invisible scoreboard but it was a fantastic effort from the Lightning. It was a very physical match but also a frustrating one and our girls coped well. To conclude, Coach Nikki led the team song with Alicia playing the role of Hollywood camera woman in the middle of the circle, not letting footy get in the way of her passion for art and the perfect shot. The girls sang the song with awesome enthusiasm, very proud of their tough performance. They're now absolutely flawless in the lyrics department too!

Players Of The Match : Juliet and Hannah

Words : Greg Allan