

# MATCH REPORT



HBE UNDER 13YG vs Hills Phoenix  
ROUND 4 - 04/05/2025  
Balmoral Road Reserve, Kellyville

A new opponent and a new ground for the girls to experience this week – Hills Phoenix is an alliance born out of Kellyville Magpies and Baulkham Hills Hawks and are splitting their games between their home grounds. This week we were out at Kellyville, in fine conditions to help wrap up a solid day of footy.

Hills Phoenix are proving to be a strong team this year, having vanquished their three previous opponents with scorelines similar to Pittwater's and ours. Their girls proved skilled and willing on a massive oval, but ours took it right to them for the entire match. After quarter time our pressure forced turned goals into several behinds to give them a far from insurmountable lead at half time.

We came back strongly in the second half, with a better use of space pulling us within a goal a three quarter time before a couple of behinds and then two very late goals in the fourth seeing them finish with a 19 point win that would have kept them on the edge of their seat the whole way.

## Players

- Willow was impressive, matching a rotating selection of players in the mids with her work effort and skills – both in gathering the ball, but long kicks to our forwards to give Nya, Emily and the rest space to work in.
- Sofia knew no way but full speed at the ball. She threw herself into any contest and won the ball plenty of times with no regard for her wellbeing, high contact be damned.
- Isabelle did not shirk from a contest this week. She tackled and worked hard all day, including a fantastic hustle all the way down one wing pressuring and tackling three Hills players in a row. That effort along with some clever positioning for handball receives to try and clear from congestion, saw her receiving Player of the Week for her troubles.
- Maddie played as a key defender this week, positioning as the first line of defence against Hills players moving forward. She found herself winning really hard balls and fighting for every inch, including several opportunities where she won and rebounded the ball despite being isolated against multiple Hills Phoenix players. Even with copping a sore hand part

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way through the second half, she would not leave a contest behind and just kept throwing herself at the ball.

- Vally showed her composure again this week, this time with a terrific marking game taking advantage of the space – with several intercept marks where she cut off a promising attack just to send it back towards our forwards.
- Hazel brought some consistent pressure across our half forward line, forcing a contest and preventing any easy rebounds from our kicks forward.
- Maia started forward but showed her versatility later in the game when the coaches dropped her into defence. She rebounded well, including one eye-opening run leaving Hills players for dead as she streamed up the wing.
- Despite playing on a wing Sandy found herself winning her own ball in amongst half a dozen or more teammates and Hills players a lot. She definitely stepped up under the pressure, showing some real strength by breaking tackles and beating congestion to find the tiniest bit of space before unloading that awesome kick of hers.
- Josie came up from U11s this week and proved her worth by stepping in when needed as an injury replacement, keeping defenders honest in the goal square and almost being able to nab a goal with her repeated efforts at the ball.
- Nya took real advantage of all the space on the large field to set herself up for a couple of goals, forcing the ball forward with soccer skills and follow-up efforts with no one ahead of her and leaving Hills players in her wake.
- Juliet was striking with her composure against pressure in the defensive line – receiving handballs and loose balls against girls several years her elder, and without fail getting her foot to the ball in the congestion to help us rebound.
- If we could play Lucy in this amount of space available every week, watch out defenders. Her forward dash when starting off even with the defenders would have given the Phoenix nightmares, with just bad luck seeing her miss out on a goal or two.
- Zahra provided smart play all game to pressure the Hills' ball winners and ensure they got as few clean possessions with the loose ball when possible. With plenty of hurried kicks forward, Zahra managed to read the ball and contest plenty of them when the ball hit the ground.
- Kira showed her tricky footwork and ball skills this week, especially in the second half. With some great marking in conjunction with Vally and often finding room when you'd swear she had none, she was key to getting the ball from defense into our forward line to try and set up scoring opportunities.

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- Olivia played as the last line in defence and her game sense came to the fore again, with her skillful picking whether to pressure the player or ensuring the ball crossed for a behind rather than a goal keeping the game close through the second quarter especially.
- Emily continued her goal scoring this week under equally hard conditions, demonstrating hard work to get on the end of our ball movement forward as well as dropping back in the last quarter to help provide some rebound as well.

## Score

Hornsby-Berowra Eagles 3.4.22 dft by Hills Phoenix 5.11.41

## Goals

Nya Nicolson: 2; Emily Pace: 1

Report by Donald Shepherd (Photos by Donald, Corrin and Amelia Shepherd available on Teams)