

## Match Report: U13s Battle the Elements and the Giants

### Round 5 – Rain-soaked Showdown on Hallowed Ground

Coach Burnsey set the tone in the sheds pre-game, rallying the troops with a steely message: *"The real competition starts today."* And he wasn't wrong.

As the team ran through the banner to celebrate the milestone '50' for Alex, the clash against the brave U13's Eagles against the towering Forrest Lions was to begin. As the lined up on the field for the mandatory checks, the Eagles stood proud, allowing the cheers from the crowd to wash over them.

The heavens opened early and didn't let up, setting the stage for a classic wet-weather footy clash, reminiscent of the epic battle in 2004 between Sydney and West Coast in the elimination final. With the oval transformed into a mud pit, it was always going to be a game of grit over glamour.

From the first bounce, it was clear the Lions weren't just big in name. Their ruckman looked like he'd wandered in from the seniors, but our boys didn't flinch. Despite the slippery Sherrin and ankle-deep puddles, we cracked in hard, laying tackles that echoed across the park.

#### First Quarter:

The Lions drew first blood with a scrappy point off the deck, but our midfield brigade—dug deep. Eagles were everywhere, sharking taps and sending the ball forward with mongrel punts that skidded through the slop. The Eagles hit back going point for point, displaying courage beyond their years. The first quarter ended with 1 point each.

#### Second Quarter:

The rain intensified, and so did the contest. It was trench warfare in the middle, with boots full of mud and guernseys unrecognisable. 1 goal and 1 point each awarded to each team and the tackling came hard and fast from both sides. A quick passage of play allowed the Lions in for a goal just before the half time siren blew. 8 point to 14 way of the opposition.

#### Third Quarter (The Premiership Quarter):

Hunger for victory (and an unfortunate mix-up with the catering team meant no

refreshments at half time) stirred the boys on and they entered the pitch for the third quarter. A brilliant passage of play lead us to the goal end and a beautiful mark and kick through the posts. The lions hit back instantly, scoring again and surging ahead. The ref was momentarily distracted, and a hard hit left an eagle spread on the ground. No free kick was awarded but the need to avenge their teammate pushed the Eagles into overdrive. Relentless attacking saw the Eagles aim for the goals, only to be taken by the wind to the left and only a point. 15 to 20 as the siren went and the boys came off, ready to be inspired by their fearless leader.

### **Final Quarter:**

Down on the scoreboard, the boys whipped each other into a frenzy encouraging the team to 'lift' and lift they did. With the game in the balance, the Lions surged, but our backline stood tall—literally and figuratively. Moving the ball downfield with furious anger and lightning speed, the Eagles found the posts and punted it through for a goal. The lions hit back and both teams scored a behind to put the Lions 4 points ahead.

The clock was running down but the boys maintained their composure. Momentum swung our way. The boys played wet-weather footy to perfection—no fancy stuff, just long bombs, hard leads, and hard attacking and defending the ball, sending the crowd into a frenzy under their umbrellas. Frantic screaming could be heard on the sideline from an over-zealous fan, encouraging the boys to 'get in there and help each other out'. A clean mark taken to the left of the post saw the ball punted through the goals, placing the Eagles ahead by 1 point.

The boys played smart footy, winding the clock down and defending the ball like a team possessed. As the siren sounded out, the crowd and team erupted. It was a hard-fought game and they should all be proud of the game they played.

Callum Mills Award – Oleg Hart

Player of the Match -

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### **Final Score:**

**U13s: 4.4 (28)**

**Lions: 4.3 (27)**

