

MATCH REPORT



HBE UNDER 13YG v North-West Lightning
ROUND 8 - 01/06/2025
Rofe Park, Hornsby

Our second game in a row against the Division 1/2 refugees - this time with some extra passion as it was against North-West Lightning - State against State, Mate against Mate... no, wait, the first half of that was Wednesday night and the less said about that the better. The second still holds as plenty of former teammates, schoolmates and just mates were facing each other for the first time.

The girls again gave up plenty of height across the board (especially with the U11 squadrant coming up) but once more did not let that deter them. Lightning got on top in the first quarter, pinning us down in our defensive 50 but could not hit the scoreboard - not even for a behind - thanks to frantic defense and pressure from everyone. The scoring and game opened up in the second - Lightning probably had the most of the field position again, managing to convert two goals but this time every time the Eagles found space they flew - three goals straight (a composed Juliet kick, a Vally toe poke on the goal line, and a free kick to Eliza getting plenty of height to clear the Lightning player on the mark) saw us holding a well-deserved lead at half time.

The third quarter felt more even, though the Lightning converted a bit more successfully with two goals to our single - though ours was one for the highlight reel, with Maia collecting the ball as the furthest forward, leaving the Lightning defender grasping at her dust, and then rolling it through from quite a distance. 24 points each going into the last - the Lightning were pinging at our goals from everywhere but the girls gave them zero space and after scoring six behinds the Eagles got the ball down to our forward 50 - Nya put in an almighty effort to get behind the defense and then draw a free kick, only to see her kick drift wide with less than a minute to go.

The effort and desire across the whole ground was impressive and all the girls should be rightly proud - they can hold their heads high after that effort, taking the game down to the wire. Here's to next time around...

Players

- Lucy epitomised how focused the team were this week - she was hard at the ball, diving over it and chasing it down instead of letting it come to her.

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- Sandy was key to our whole team defense - working back off a wing, she won intercept possessions and setting up our forward forays with her long kicks to the wing.
- Isabelle was another who stepped up given the opposition, reading both taps and kicks and showing more willingness to charge through congestion at a loose ball to make it hers, finishing with two intercept marks and more intercept possessions plus a couple of hard hitting tackles resulting in Lightning girls on the ground and/or balls kicked out of bounds.
- Vally provided a marking masterclass, both off Eagle and Lightning boots, finding space to run and bounce (whether it was one or four, as she kept in front of her opponent), then sending that ball into the forward 50 to set up our goals, including an opportunistic toe poke outworking two Lightning defenders to score her own.
- Willow earned Player of the Week on her 50th, not only rucking consistently and often effectively against the taller Lightning ruck, but providing many more second efforts once the ball hit the ground giving us the equivalent of twice the players at the contest.
- The highlight of the focus the team brought was Pippa knocking over girls twice her size (maybe not literally, I didn't get them to stand back to back). She worked really hard to get to any contested ball to either lay a shepherd that would open up space for a teammate or win the ball herself.
- Eliza started her impact with earning a free kick to kick a goal, but then moved back and hassled everyone, made the Lightning players earn any balls won with her tackles and showed great timing knocking the ball away from the bigger girls.
- Maia again showed off her fantastic speed, gathering the ball off a Lightning spilled mark (also due to her pressure), running with the ball in one hand, touching it on the ground in lieu of a bounce, and finishing it off with the goal.
- Emily was another that was fired up and physical on the day. She threw herself into the contest and culminated with a great mark snatched out of the air with strong hands.
- Juliet put her skills on display this week, not only scoring a goal but also nailing her marking and providing such confident hands for someone playing up an age group that she was clearly not overwhelmed on the day.
- Sofia gave a mountainous effort against the bigger girls, working hard time and again to tackle and hold up attacking opportunities to give the team time to regroup.
- Zahra was a vital contributor - technically as a wing, but really does her best work right around the fringes off the contest. When the ball spills out her ability to collect it, spread and kick into space, or wrap up (or rip the ball away from!) the player bringing the ball out is key to the team's ability to get the ball forward.

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- Kira stepped up her game as well, with her customary ability to clear the ball out of a contest to gain metres every time she gets her hands on it, but also some really really strong tackles that proved inescapable for the Lightning.
- Nya was a clear defensive focus for the Lightning throughout, finding herself rotated into the middle for an effective stint including a great ruck win before moving back forward where her attack on the ball earned her that free kick at the end of the game - so close! But it was a fantastic effort to get to that point in the first place.
- Maddie provided midfield effort in a backline package - you just know she's going to win the ball if needed, or take down her opponent if she didn't get to the ball first.
- Olivia saved several goals with either a mark in the goal square or a clear attack on an incoming bouncing ball (harder than it looks!), able to send rebounds to anywhere she could find space for Sandy and other teammates to jump upon, topping it all off with a decent midfield cameo - charging so hard at the ball that I thought it was Sofia had changed numbers!

Score

Hornsby-Berowra Eagles 4.1.25 dft by North-West Lightning 4.6.30

Goals

Juliet Allan: 1; Vally Taborsky: 1; Eliza Noble: 1; Maia McHugh: 1.

Report by Donald Shepherd (Photos available on Teams)