

MATCH REPORT



The Cardio Cup: Full Field, Half Tank

3 May 2026, Rofe Park

8 v 8 Intraclub | Full-size field | Q1: 13 mins, Q2 to Q4: 10 mins (mercifully shortened)

The Hornsby-Berowra Eagles returned to the home of Masters Footy, Rofe Park, once again, the scene of their successful last outing, for what has been dubbed by this reporter as 'The Cardio Cup', an apt summary due to the lack of numbers and the somewhat dubious decision made by the powers-that-be, to play 8 v 8, full field.

Q1 - Fast Start Turns Into Early Blowout (both scoreboard and lungs)

The tone was set early, and it wasn't subtle.

The Hornets came out like a house on fire, moving the ball quickly and finding space far too easily for an 8-a-side game on a full-size deck. With the opening term running a full 13 minutes, the extra time only amplified the damage as the Hornets piled on goal after goal through slick ball movement and relentless spread. It didn't take long to realise this wasn't just a skill contest it was going to be a war of attrition, and the open spaces would favour those with a bit of petrol in the tank (currently less than \$2/L in Berowra).

Will was the standout from the opening bounce, wasting no time putting on a highlight reel - snaps, check-sides, bananaing the ball at his will. It felt less like structured play and more like a one-man showcase at times. At this point he was singlehandedly clipping the Eagles' wings, getting separation, finding space by not leaving the goal square, and finishing like he was in a training drill.

The Eagles had their moments, with goals to Neal and Brendan, but they were already looking a step behind as the Hornets sliced through the middle. Defensive transition was becoming optional, and the extra length of the quarter only added to the early fatigue. By quarter time it was 6.1 (37) to 2.1 (13), and you could already say the Eagles were up against it and feeling it in the legs.

Q1:	Hornets: 6.1 (37)	Eagles: 2.1 (13)
Goals	Will (4), Glenn (1), Steve (1)	Neal (1), Brendan (1)
Highlights	Will immediately asserts dominance: checkside, snaps, bananas... take your pick Early blowout begins	

Q2 - Chaos, Cardio, and One for the Ages

With quarters shortened to 10 minutes (a decision that would prove very wise), the game continued at a high tempo, although the early signs of fatigue were impossible to ignore. There were subtle tactical adjustments creeping in, including the occasional deliberate behind just to buy 20-30 seconds of recovery time. Game management at its finest.

The Hornets maintained control, linking up cleanly and spreading the load on the scoreboard. Spider, Dan and Will all hit the scoreboard, but the moment everyone will remember came courtesy of Glenn.

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In the goal square, with time seemingly on his side, Glenn somehow let the ball bounce do a Luis Suárez nutmeg straight through his legs before regathering and 'calmly' soccering it through with the thunder of Brendan closing in. Panic? Maybe. Genius? Also maybe. *"You won't see that in any coaching manual!"* It was chaotic brilliance.

The Eagles showed flashes, most notably Neal's huge 60m* uncontested run - *he's had a bounce... he's had another... he mightn't come back from this!* - which lifted the tempo and put the wind back into the Eagles lungs. Benny chimed in with a goal, proving he can convert when left entirely alone in the forward 50.

The ruck contests started to become a highlight - Andy coming into his own at times, easy to do when you're 8 feet tall.

Still, the Hornets' cleaner ball use and superior transition saw them extend the lead by a further four goals to 10.3 (63) to 3.2 (20) at the main break. The margin was growing, and so was the collective need for oxygen.

Q2:	Hornets: 10.3 (63)	Eagles: 3.2 (20)
Goals	Spider (1), Will (1), Dan (1), Glenn (1)	Benny (1)
Highlights	Glenn goal of the night contender: through his own legs, regather, off the deck, goal Neal with a 60m uncontested run (defensive structures = optional)	

Q3 - Heavy Legs and Missed Chances

By the third quarter, the "Cardio Cup" name was fully justified. The pace dropped slightly, but the chaos didn't. The Hornets continued to generate opportunities, but accuracy wavered - misses from directly in front, shots drifting wide, and a few classic "should've marked that" moments. One passage summed it up perfectly: a ball allowed to bounce kindly, time to steady... and then straight into the post.

The Eagles had their chances but couldn't capitalise, adding only behinds for the quarter. Brendan did produce a heroic 100m* sprint alongside Toby that would have Lachlan Kennedy quaking in his boots and a potential call up to Glasgow still on the cards - an effort that was equal parts impressive and questionable from a long-term recovery perspective.

Meanwhile, Benny delivered one of the more relatable moments of the match, kicking directly into the man on the mark from a free kick.

At three-quarter time, the Hornets had stretched the lead to 11.7 (73) to 3.4 (22). The result was all but sealed, but the entertainment value remained high as did the levels of lactic acid.

Q3:	Hornets: 11.7 (73)	Eagles: 3.4 (22)
Goals	Spider (1)	
Highlights	Brendan goes on a 100m sprint with Toby (lungs officially gone after this) Benny: kicks directly into the man on the mark - textbook	

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Q4 – Survival Mode and Sealing the Result

The final quarter became a genuine test of willpower. Structure gave way to instinct as both sides battled heavy legs and fading lungs. The Hornets continued to press, with Will and Glenn adding late goals, though several scoring attempts dissolved into rushed or “touched chaos” behinds.

Steve provided one of the great moments of the night, marking and then calling for a 60m bomb with full confidence before realising that it might tweak a hammy. *He likes his chances from here...* only for the passage to end in a turnover and a holding-the-ball decision. Ambition met reality in real time.

To their credit, the Eagles kept pushing. Lachy and Rich both found goals through strong passages of play, offering glimpses of what might have been with a bit more in the tank. Down back, Neil S was quietly enormous, going toe-to-toe with Neal in the side battle for the Neal-Neil Cup – a genuine contest within the contest, and didn't take a backward step all night.

Q4:	Hornets: 13.12 (90)	Eagles: 5.4 (34)
Goals	Will (1), Glenn (1)	Lachy (1), Rich (1)
Highlights	Neil vs Neal becomes a genuine subplot Multiple “touched chaos” behinds	

The final siren couldn't come quickly enough in the end for all combatants on the field. Hornets 13.12 (90) to Eagles 5.4 (34). A strong win, but more importantly, a survival story.

In the end, footy was the real winner, with oxygen a close second.

A big thanks to all involved including Spider from Balmain and the crowd who stuck around to watch – great to have you with us!

Final:	Hornets: 13.12 (90)	Eagles: 5.4 (34)
Goals	Will (6), Glenn (3), Spider (2), Steve (1), Dan (1)	Neal (1), Brendan (1), Benny (1), Lachy (1), Rich (1)

*measurements estimated at time of reporting

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