

# MATCH REPORT



HBE UNDER 17 vs Eastern Suburbs Stingrays  
Round 2 - 26/04/2026  
The Home of Football - Rofe Park, Hornsby Heights

As the sun started to set on a big day of footy at the Home Of Football - Rofe Park, our U17s Eagles prepared for their match. Today's opponents would be the Eastern Suburbs Stingrays who were coming off a bye. Of course, our Eagles were backing up after a close loss against the Hills Eagles last week in Baulkham Hills. It wasn't fun to lose but I was confident our boys would have learnt a lot from the experience.

Today's game was a special moment for Nicole and I as it was Lucas' 100th match for the club. We're both very proud of him for this amazing achievement and to do it at such an excellent club makes it even more special. I know how much he loves representing the mighty Hornsby-Berowra Eagles and like a lot of our boys, he has a strong attachment to the club. The fun he has had, the friends he has made and the guidance he's had from his coaches has been invaluable. I'm sure he was a little nervous before his big milestone match but probably not anywhere near the state of anxiety I was experiencing, worrying about whether the banner we made would still be intact before Cob and the boys ran through it.

Our Eagles warmed up in the twilight as the Eagles 15s Girls side on the field stormed back from 20-1 down to get a 27-20 victory against local rivals, North-West Lightning. We had a couple of big outs in Jake S and Ollie but we welcomed back a goal scorer in Callum, the mad redhead Ronin and Curtis - a new player for us but one who already had a close connection to HBE.

Finally we were underway and it was very difficult for me to make out players in the fading light, apologies in advance to names and events that are missing from the report. Early on, play was quick from both teams with the ball travelling rapidly from end to end. Emmett saved us a couple of times in the beginning stages with his trademark defensive marks but the Stingrays were first to score with a one pointer. This was followed soon after with a rushed behind. Play was hotly contested on the field, I couldn't see a lot of detail but I noticed plenty of strong efforts from our guys with Henry, Lucas, Linden, Jack R and many more getting amongst it. Despite all this, Eastern Suburbs were able to register the first major score of the game. They probably should have got another after a handy mark from their gigantic full-forward but he missed a relatively easy kick in front.

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The Eagles continued to work hard and Henry was able to get us on the front foot with a sharp intercept mark. After some more positive play, Linden sent it Tom's way but Eastern Suburbs were able to counter and send it straight back and score. Hornsby finished the quarter well but we were down at the first break 14-1.

Onto the 2nd and a combined midfield effort from Lucas, Ethan, Aiden, Jack A and a few others signalled our intentions. Tyler and Ronin also contributed well with some solid kicking and marking. A dazzling mark and run from Henry brought a deserved cheer from the HBE faithful but we couldn't convert it to points. Will, Luke, Aiden, Jake G and others came together for some brave play right in front of us - the effort was certainly there from our guys. However, the Stingrays wouldn't be denied and absorbed the pressure we had been producing and kicked a set-shot goal from the side of the posts.

Things were pretty brutal out there, there were plenty of big hits and willingness in defence as bodies from both sides went flying. Aiden was a casualty of this, coming off after a nasty knock to the eye. The Eagles were giving their all but the Stringrays were proving a bit too sharp for us. 26-1 at the main break.

The 3rd quarter began positively with Hornsby-Berowra hitting the scoreboard with a point. We continued to push forward with Will and Curtis standout performers in the encouraging play. Emmett continued to be brilliant in defence, saving us again in a thrilling one-on-one battle with a Stingrays player. Harry was also great with some tidy work at the back end. Our forwards benefitted from this, adding to our total with a behind which could have been a major score on a luckier day. Following this, Linden booted a monster kick to our forwards. The ball bounced around in the goal square hopefully with Josh pouncing on the opportunity, hammering it through the sticks for our first six pointer!

The Eagles fought on with Curtis locking up an Easts player and earning a free. He sent it Linden's way who kicked forward but the Stingrays were able to defend the play this time. Aiden, playing with only one eye, sent it straight back our way with a ferocious tackle. He kicked to Tyler who marked beautifully and sent it right up our attacking end. We kept the ball up the right area for the remainder of the quarter and we scored a rushed behind to add to our growing score. The 3rd was a much improved quarter from the Eagles, we trailed 30-10 going into the final term.

At the beginning of the final quarter, Luke and Jake G combined expertly to give Ronin a shot at goal which just fell short. Never mind, Alistair sent it through the sticks for a cracking goal after a Ronin intercept. Alistair's smile following the 6 pointer was as broad as the goal square itself. Despite our strong start, our opponents just would not go away and were able to kick a goal of their own. The clock ticked down and the Eagles continued to fight, we were spending a lot more time in our attacking half.

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We kept sending the ball towards the goals but the Stingrays fullback with the yellow headgear kept retrieving the footy for his team - he proved to be a real thorn in our side throughout the match. Our efforts were finally rewarded late when a huge kick from birthday boy Ronin rolled through the sticks. It was a nice way to finish for our Eagles who left nothing out there on the night.

As the final siren blew, our boys looked absolutely spent. We had fought back really well and had actually won the second half. The team listened intently as Tim, Nick and Linden delivered their final words. The mood was very positive as it should have been, we had pushed a strong side and had never relented at any stage. The U17 Eagles will be very keen to make amends next week with an early morning clash against Penshurst Panthers at the Home of Football - Rofe Park.

## **Final score**

**Eastern Suburbs Stingrays 37 Hornsby-Berowra Eagles 22**

**Words - Greg Allan**