

MATCH REPORT



HBE UNDER 17 vs Pennant Hills/Westbrook Demons
Round 7- 31/05/2026
Ern Holmes

Our Round 7 fixture was to take place at Pennant Hills Oval, a place that holds great memories for our extended Eagles family. Of course, this was the site where we beat our local rivals to storm into last year's Grand Final. What a victory that was! I think most would say it was our greatest win as a team.... You can relive that special day right [here](#).

Today was a new day though and the U17 Eagles were keen to continue their winning ways after a huge win against South-West Devils last week at the Home Of Football. The Under 17s Demons had been travelling quite well too, it was going to be a top clash against the team we love to beat the most...

After a week of rain I was unsure if we were even going to play today. To my surprise though, the playing surface looked in decent condition. The grass was long and a bit damp but it was a fair way off a mudbath. The weather was very pleasant for the last day of Autumn, the sun was shining brightly and a breeze blowing across the oval kept things cool and perfect for footy.

I'd been out and about since early in the morning as Juliet had a game of basketball out at Penrith. As a result, I was quite hungry so I took my chances at the Pennant Hills barbecue. I felt a bit uneasy as I paid for my sausage and egg on a roll at the canteen. I knew that even if this was supposed to be some sort of amazing culinary experience it wouldn't be as good as anything at Rofe... I held my nose, gobbled my food down and took my spot ready for the day's action.

We were underway and Penno got on the attack early. Players were skidding about making me think that maybe it was a bit wetter than I originally thought. I noticed a handy clearing kick from the back from Aiden but the Demons were first to score from a set shot. Following this, a kicking and marking sequence from Ollie and Tyler got us going forward until play was stopped when Ollie went down. The Eagles faithful held their breath as the medic attended to him. Thankfully, he was able to walk off the ground so hopefully it was just a knock and he would be back.

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Back to the action and Jake S, Ethan and Aiden worked well to gain an attacking chance but the Demons were able to cut off Jake's shot. We put the Pennant Hills backs under some pressure after this with Zach leading the way. Ethan won possession back with a great tackle but again Penno were able to counter. Will led another fightback with some tidy work but once again the Demons were able to regain the ball. They marked in front and kicked another major.

A Hornsby highlight followed with a beautiful mark from Henry but the Demons would not let up as they marked just to the left of the posts and booted through another 6. From a Penno behind, Henry kicked forward to find Jake S who was lurking and ready to strike. Jake went on one of his customary runs before he booted forward to Alistair who was standing on his lonesome, right in front of the sticks. Alistair played on after marking well and smashed it through the goals for our first major score! Despite Josh's dodgy protests on the sidelines, putting Alistair nice and deep was a masterstroke from Coach Tim! The quarter time siren blew and it was safe to say we were pretty flat in the opening term. We were down at the break 19-6 but the team would have been buoyed by the last minute goal that we scored. Nick and Tim gave a quick talk during the break, Luke followed with his traditional rev-up.

Onto the 2nd and Lucas managed a nice tap from the ball-up but somehow Penno grabbed possession and cleared it forward. Things were looking ominous, however, Sam saved the day as he hit the ball out of trouble. From the ensuing scramble, the Demons were able to find some space and kicked the first goal of the term. The Eagles fought on and an out-on-the-full kick from Pennant Hills gave us a chance at the attacking end. Will, Ollie and Jake S combined to give us a shot at goal but it missed to the right. Never mind, the positive momentum gained from that last play helped us to earn a 50m penalty. Tyler made no mistake as he converted the opportunity into 6 points!

An intercept mark from Henry got us going again after a Demons behind, he found Ollie but we didn't travel much further than halfway. Penno continued to attack and found space up front to kick another goal. From the ball-up, Aiden did well with a clearance even if we were having a lot of trouble getting forward. Jasper continued the fight with a tough play but Penno again prevailed. A nice combined movement that started from the back gave us some much-needed momentum. Henry, Sam, Lucas and Josh all contributed in this play - a behind was the result. Following this, we were able to lock it in down our attacking end for a while. Our effort was commendable but we couldn't turn it into points. Jake S managed a behind but Penno eventually fought back after our period of dominance and grabbed a goal out of nothing. We were a lot better in the 2nd quarter but the improved effort didn't really translate into points on the board. We were down 39-14 at the main break.

Signs were good at the beginning of the 3rd as we went on the attack straight away. Ollie and Jake S came together to give us an early shot. Penno countered quickly with only Tom and Emmett stopping them from scoring. Emmett did well again to keep them to only a behind when he found himself up against 3 opposition players in the goal square. I

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In sad scenes for the Eagles, Henry limped past me with some sort of ankle or leg injury - I hoped it wasn't too serious. Despite some heroics from our backmen, we couldn't stop the Demons' momentum and they converted an attacking opportunity into 6. We continued to fight on and Tyler earned us a free. From this, Aiden kicked from a distance and was unlucky to only score from a forced behind. Play was contested evenly for a while after this but we were lucky when Penno missed an easy shot in front. Ollie and Callum put on a bit of a show with an impressive kicking and marking sequence but again there was no score. The Demons remained relentless but thankfully their kicks were only 1 pointers at this stage. The barricades finally broke in the dying seconds of the 3rd with Penno getting the goal that had eluded them for a while. We were down 59-15 going into the last quarter and heads were starting to drop in the Eagles camp. Despite this, I was hoping for a big effort in the last with hopefully a few goals for us.

To start the final term, Lucas won a free from a high shot. He kicked nicely to Tyler who marked well and we were able to attack for a period where we managed a rushed behind. Jake G was working well in the middle and was joined by Jack A who won the ball for us after a handy tackle. A bit of a scuffle broke out in the middle which resulted in thankfully not a lot, Ethan managed to wisely stay out of the thick of it. A bigger stink broke out later after a late hit on one of our players - I think we got out of that too without any umpire attention - I hope...

While this was all going on, Will was one of the few players on the field who realised there was still a game of footy on and he booted down to our attacking end. Jack R then took a tidy mark and went for a run with Luke in support. Zach and Will combined after this with Will again sending it forward. He found Josh who marked well and he expertly kicked it through for a well-deserved HBE goal! Alistair was unlucky not to get another shortly after whilst Will continued to take on the Penno mids with some tough stuff in the middle. Ollie sent it forward whilst Lucas and Tom combined nicely for more positive effort. After an Emmett kick, Ollie found some space and went for a long and dazzling run. He kicked to Josh who took a difficult mark and kicked an even more difficult goal!

From the ball-up, Lucas won a free in the middle and he kicked to Josh. We were able to lock in the attacking end but no points resulted. In a last ditch effort, Emmett, Jasper and Tyler worked together at the back to give us one last chance but it was to no avail as the final siren blew. The final score was 62-29 and as I'd hoped, it was a solid final effort from our Eagles in the 4th - a quarter that we actually won.

It wasn't the result we were after but there were still plenty of positives to take out of the match. We never shirked our task at any stage and in reality we weren't that far off our opponents. Penno were just a bit more precise and executed better overall. The boys were somewhat dejected in the post match chat but everyone acknowledged the effort with both Tim and Jack R speaking with encouragement and an eye to the future.

Words - Greg Allan