



Footy Department Report

CONFIDENTIAL: From the desk of *The Insider*

Round 4 Under 11 White

Surrey Park Panthers U11s White, celebrating Jack 'Tackle' McLaren's 50th game, hosted the winless Glen Iris Gladiators in what always feels like a local derby. Nothing tops beating the oversized pretty boys from Glen Iris, so if they leave Surrey Park with the points they're going to earn them.

Well, if the U10's game last week at Brunswick lulled us into a false sense of security then this week's game fired us up. Off the back of our U10's dishing out a 20 goal thumping we followed suit, putting three quick goals on the scoreboard before THE INSIDER had even got to the game. I'm reliably informed that 'Chuckles' Watt and 'Jumpin' Joshy were stuck to their men like glue in the back half, repelling a couple of early attacks against all odds. 'The Hammer' wouldn't be beaten in a ruck contest, while 'Killer' Minett with sure hands and strong tackling made sure we were getting plenty of drive out of the middle. 'DA' Fox, 'Tich' Tutty and Tommy 'Macca' McDonald pounced on the pill down forward to each snaffle a sausage roll. Apparently 'Macca's' goal was pretty special, so I'm hoping to see another one just like it very soon! When I got to the game the score was 3.2 to 0.0 and I was anticipating a massive win against the over-rated male models from Glen Iris. But the game tightened up.

In the 2nd quarter the Gladiators rotated some good players through the middle of the ground. 'Pepsi' Max Dryden worked hard across half back to spoil a couple of contests, then combined with 'Knuckles' Ridd to rebound the ball. 'Tackle' McLaren lived up to his nickname by putting the ball carriers under enormous pressure. 'Buckets' O'Neill in the ruck gave a great contest and was rewarded for his hard running with a couple of strong marks on the grandstand wing. 'Tich' Tutty and 'Mad' Max showed Glen Iris a clean pair of heels across half back and through the middle to create scoring opportunities up forward, but we couldn't find the opening between the big sticks and our opposition did. We went into the half time break with a slender lead, 'Mad' Max with an ice-pack on his knee and 'The Hammer' hobbling. Whoever got the points was

definitely going to earn them. Supercoach asked for a special effort and away we went.

In the 3rd Quarter we showed greater intensity at the contest but it was difficult to move the slippery ball forward effectively. Tommy 'Chook' Shevlin responded to the coach's half time spray, shutting down his opponent and repelling the ball across half back. 'Biff' Tanner and 'Sweetie' McLaren were ferocious through the middle of the ground, while 'Crash' Soussa and Josh 'Curly' Southwood were bumping and tackling hard inside the forward 50, and at the bottom of every pack. We couldn't find our 4th goal, though, and we went into the break trailing the Gardiners Creek Grommets by 8 points.

In the final quarter we gave it everything we had. 'Jumpin' Joshy laid a big tackle up forward to inspire the crowd, allowing 'Smooth' Zac Mulholland to run on and kick a goal we had been desperately looking for. 'Fitzzy' Fitzgerald presented strongly across half forward to give our key forwards more opportunities. Jamie 'The Jet' Ridd and 'The Rock' Campbell weren't letting the Gladiators inside our defensive 50, and we were playing the game on our terms. 'The Hammer' ran forward to crash a contest, the ball fell our way and we were into the forward line again... but the siren blew and we were thwarted. We couldn't find the goal we needed, and went down by that margin: 5.5 (35) to 4.5 (29)

The Supercoach's award went to a little bloke who did exactly what was asked of him for the entire match, and who played such an important role in building our big lead in the first quarter. Well done 'Killer' Caen! 'DA' Fox was awarded the Gladiators' Derek Zoolander Medal for a super game in which he just never stopped trying. Look out Dustin Martin – DA is gunning for your spot!

Key learnings from this game:

- When it's bucketing down or the ground's slippery you don't need to be pretty. Long kicks up the middle of the ground are best, but just keep the ball moving in our direction. You **can** kick off the ground in U11's.
- We still need to focus on retaining our structure late in games.
- Maintain 'touch' with your man when you're playing in defense.

Another ripping match! Well done to you all for never giving in. See you on Sunday.