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MEDIA RELEASE

BENDIGO BANK WESTVIC HOCKEY *Under 17 Boys*

<i>Date:</i>	Friday 9th September, 2011
<i>Venue:</i>	Altona
<i>Score:</i>	WestVic 2 lost to Footscray 3
<i>Goals:</i>	Will Jackson, Kendal Meyer
<i>Best:</i>	Zak McMurray, Will Jackson, Nick Toogood

WestVic's Under 17 Boys hockey season has ended at the hands of Footscray after losing a thrilling semi-final by a goal.

Going in as underdogs against the minor premier after losing their previous two encounters, Bendigo Bank WestVic had Footscray under pressure from the opening whistle, holding the ball up forward without reward.

But Footscray didn't take long to assert their dominance in the midfield and pushed forward with speed to score twice in the first fifteen minutes, including a clever goal from an acute angle along the backline.

WestVic settled from there, holding Footscray at bay through loose defender Nick Toogood, who was superb in cutting off numerous forward thrusts.

With strikers Darcy Gray, Matt Haberfield and Hamish Verco positioning themselves well to create forward pressure, WestVic found plenty of ball on the turnover but could not translate it to the scoreboard.

With half-time instructions to play the ball more quickly out of defence, the scoreless WestVic increased the tempo and began to look dangerous in the second half. Captain, Zak McMurray worked tirelessly alongside Thomas Watts and Alex Bouchier in the battle for midfield control. And with Toogood and Bryce Robinson holding out Footscray, WestVic began to sense they could fight their way back into the match.

A trademark run from key midfielder Will Jackson punched a hole through the Footscray defence and he was brought down in the scoring circle, resulting in WestVic being awarded a penalty stroke. Jackson converted to narrow the lead and give WestVic some momentum.

The excellent forward pressure continued through Scott Toogood and Zach Shipham, providing WestVic with more chances to score. Penalty-corner specialist Kendal Meyer had the big WestVic contingent in the crowd on their feet when he equalised with 12 minutes left. A chance to score moments later went begging with a Meyer pass into the circle narrowly missing the WestVic forwards in space.

At the other end, a rattled Footscray proved they were not done with, constructing several threatening forward entries. A goal looked likely until goal-keeper Joel Hughes provided a big second-effort dive to deny Footscray their best chance.

As extra-time loomed, Footscray worked the ball into the right side of the circle with only minutes on the clock and scored in traffic through one of their key players. That goal proved to be the decisive one as WestVic fell agonisingly short of a comeback victory.

For further information contact:

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