

WestVic Girls Lose in Extra Time

In a disappointing end to an outstanding season the WestVic Hockey girls lost the Grand Final of Hockey Victoria's Under 17 Girls North Division to Yarra Valley 3 - 4 in extra time.

A strong opening flurry of Yarra Valley passes caught the Bendigo Bank girls defense on the wrong foot giving the Yarra Valley girls an early 1- 0 lead in the first 90 seconds of play.

A tough, pressure game from both teams kept the ball trapped between the 25 metre lines for the next 7 minutes.

Neither team was able to approach their scoring area until Emma Ruyg and Celeste Bussell combined to give the WestVic girls their first but unsuccessful scoring opportunity.

Despite continued pressure from the WestVic halfback line of Ruyg, Kate Ryan and Lauren Bendall the Yarra Valley girls broke through again in the 12 minute to score off a penalty corner and take a 2-0 lead.

Two minutes later goalie Katey Shell was forced out of the goal by a 2 on 1 Yarra Valley fast break. A third Yarra Valley goal was only prevented by Ryan steaming down the field to stop the shot just as it reached the goal line.

At the other end of the field WestVic forwards Carolyn Van der Broek, Emma Maloney and Sheridan Walsh were working hard to break through the Yarra Valley defense. The WestVic girls finally earned a penalty corner in the 17th minute but were again turned back at the goal line by the Yarra Valley defense.

Both teams stepped up the pressure for the last 10 minutes of the half. As the ball moved rapidly from end line to end line Bendall was combining with WestVic full backs Emily Doyle and Michaela Dalli had to turn back numerous Yarra Valley incursions into their scoring area.

Offensively the WestVic girls finally started to generate their normal running style of play. Shelly Wood and Amelia Frantz were combining well with Bussell, Maloney and Van der Broek to create several WestVic scoring chances without actually finding the goal.

After a very evenly matched half of play in which Yarra Valley was able to capitalise on scoring opportunities WestVic went into the half time break 2-0 down.

An injury to Doyle brought Rachel Maher back into the WestVic fullback line for the 2nd half.

The Yarra Valley girls came out firing in the 2nd half, again having a penalty corner in the first minute. Dalli and Maher were under constant pressure and an outstretched Shell stopped what appeared to be a sure Yarra Valley goal in the 3rd minute.

The stretched WestVic defense finally succumbed in the 4th minute to give Yarra Valley what appeared to be an insurmountable 3-0 lead.

But when things looked lost, the WestVic girls started to claw their way back into the match.

Offensive pressure from Jackie Lewis-Gray, Maloney and Van der Broek finally payed off with a penalty corner in the 9th minute.

Ryan took the push in to Ruyg who flicked the ball back to Ryan. Ryan's sweep shot found a gap in the Yarra Valley defense to score WestVic's first goal.

Yarra Valley came straight back at the WestVic defense. Again they were only denied a goal by quick footwork from Shell.

Three minutes later Walsh, Frantz, Wood, and Lewis-Gray had combined to help create another WestVic penalty corner.

Ruyg's power shot from the corner sped through the Yarra Valley defense so quick the defenders didn't have time to react. WestVic was back to within a goal with a 2-3 score line.

With the game being played at a frenetic pace Yarra Valley had several more scoring chances during the next 5 minutes but were turned back several times by Dalli, Maher and Shell in the last line of defense.

Fast ball movement from half backs Bendall, Ruyg and Ryan feed the WestVic forwards and helped generate 2 more penalty corners in the 19th and 22nd minutes. Ruyg tied the score 3-3 for the WestVic girls on the 2nd corner when her shot rocketed through the Yarra Valley defense into the back of the goal.

Yarra Valley came back again in the last 5 minutes with a penalty corner and 3 other shots on goal but were again stopped at the goal line by Shell, Dalli, and Maher to preserve the 3-3 score at full time.

Going into 15 minutes extra time with a "Golden Goal" rule – the first goal wins, both teams started determined to score. WestVic made the first move but were turned away by the Yarra Valley defense.

Yarra Valley rebounded moving the ball quickly through the WestVic defense to run the ball the length of the field.

Outnumbering goalie Shell 3 to 1 Yarra Valley put the ball into the net for a 4-3 win in just over a minute into extra time.