

Match Report

Practice Match

5 April 2008 v. Kew at the Bendigo Bank Ballarat Hockey Centre

Score at Half Time: 1-1

Final Score: 3-1

Goalscorers: Nathan Hargreaves (8 Mins), Leon Judd (41 Mins), Chris Vaughan (43 Mins)

Best: Ian Edgar, Nathan Hargreaves, Chris Vaughan, Allan Burrows, John Ford

In one of the most eagerly anticipated practice matches for years, we saw Kew venture up the Western Highway to Ballarat to defend the Slazenger Cup, which was last won by Ballarat in 1999.

WestVic skipper, Chris Vaughan, correctly called 'flat' and chose to take the ball – an option that paid immediate dividends, with WestVic piling early pressure on the Kew defence.

Centre half, Nathan Hargreaves and inners, Ian Edgar and Allan Burrows controlled the midfield, setting up numerous attacking thrusts. After a few near misses, Nathan Hargreaves was able to find the back of the net 8 minutes in, with a powerful strike from the top of the circle through heavy traffic.

WestVic continued to apply attacking pressure, with the game being predominantly played in the WestVic forward half. After more WestVic near misses, a Kew counterattack caught out the WestVic defence, giving them a goal against the flow of play to take a 1 all scoreline into the half time break.

Realising that WestVic needed to lift its intensity and make better decisions going into attack to make the most of its advantage in the match, the WestVic boys stepped up their efforts and found the back of the net twice early in second half, through left wing, Leon Judd and a captain's goal from Chris Vaughan.

The highlight of the second half was the switching of play through the midfield and the overlapping run provided by John Ford from the half back line, which set up a number of scoring opportunities.

WestVic ran out the match well, keeping the play in their attacking zone for the majority of the half, to run out 3-1 victors on the day and regain the Slazenger Cup for the first time since 1999.

The WestVic men have continued their undefeated run, starting with the South West Games in November 2007, and continuing through three practice matches in the 2008 pre-season. With solid form leading in to the home-and-away season, and plenty of improvement still to be made, the WestVic men will be looking to extend their winning streak come Round 1.

Match Report

Round 1

Sunday 20 April, 2008 v. Swinburne at Hawthorn 2

DON'S WESTVIC HAT-TRICK SINKS SWINBURNE

Score at Half Time: 3-0

Final Score: 8-0

Goalscorers: Allan Burrows (5 Mins), Nic Don (9, 62, 64 Mins), Chris Vaughan (12 Mins), Nick Hargreaves (39 Mins), Gavin Mann (49 Mins), Phill Gemmell (56 Mins)

Best: Ian Edgar, Nick Hargreaves, Chris Vaughan, Nic Don, Cheyne Hackett

A stunning display of goalshooting by exciting young *Bendigo Bank* WestVic Hockey forward, Nic Don, paved the way for a WestVic win, in their Hockey Victoria Men's State League 5 competition Round 1 match.

Continuing the promising form shown in pre-season practice matches, Don and fellow forwards, Chris Vaughan, Allan Burrows and Hargreaves brothers, Nick and Jason piled early pressure on the Swinburne defence. In only the fifth minute of the game, Burrows purposefully undercut the ball over the Swinburne goalkeeper's right shoulder to open the WestVic account.

A Penalty corner in the ninth minute saw Don capitalise on a penalty corner rebound from the keeper to score the first of his three goals and a hard pass from Nick Hargreaves was smartly deflected into the net by captain, Vaughan, in the twelfth minute, giving WestVic an ideal start to the game.

Swinburne was able to regroup, holding WestVic scoreless for the remainder of the half. Swinburne found more ball in their attacking half going in to the half time break, however their forward movements were continually repelled by WestVic fullbacks Ian Edgar and Gavin Mann, with WestVic holding a 3-nil advantage at half time.

With WestVic looking to improve their ball transfers through the midfield in the second half, goalscoring opportunities continued to flow. Nick Hargreaves continued to be dangerous in attack, notching up his first goal four minutes into the second half.

WestVic continued to dominate, with Cheyne Hackett, moved to the forward line, providing great offensive pressure into deep right side attack. Swinburne defenders were unable to quell Hackett's influence, as he added to an already potent forward line set-up.

A penalty stroke awarded against a rough tackle in the Swinburne defensive circle saw WestVic full back, Gavin Mann, convert the chance to put WestVic 5-nil up with twenty minutes to play. Three goals in the space of six minutes, one a penalty corner conversion from the stick of Phill Gemmell and two field goals from Nic Don to complete his hat-trick, saw WestVic go away from Round 1 with a strong 8-nil victory.

Round 2 sees the *Bendigo Bank* WestVic Hockey men taking on fellow State League 5 new-comers, St Bernards, in their first home game of the year at the *Bendigo Bank* Ballarat Hockey Centre in Gillies Street at 2pm.

Match Report

Round 2

26 April 2008 v. St Bernards at the Bendigo Bank Ballarat Hockey Centre

Score at Half Time: 3-0

Final Score: 5-0

Goalscorers: Nick Hargreaves (16, 48 Mins), Thomas Walton (30, 34 Mins), Jason Hargreaves (55 Mins)

Best: Leon Judd, Nick Hargreaves, Nic Don, Gavin Mann

The Bendigo Bank WestVic Hockey Men welcomed fellow State League 5 newcomers, St Bernards, to the Bendigo Bank Ballarat Hockey Centre on Saturday for their first home match of the 2008 season.

The game started at a frenetic pace, with both teams looking to stamp their authority on the match following confidence boosting Round One victories. St Bernards' forwards moved the ball with pace, piling plenty of pressure on the WestVic midfield, however, the class of the WestVic forwards overcame the St Bernards' defence, with the St Bernard's goalkeeper managing to evade a Nick Hargreaves reverse stick shot to put WestVic 1-nil up in the 16th minute.

Thomas Walton popped up for two late goals in the first half, slotting his first in from a tight angle and the second coming from a powerful penalty corner strike. Walton's stunning display of power hitting not only saw WestVic go into the half time break with a 3 goal advantage and their tails up, but also saw the St Bernard's goalkeeper go beserk at his defensive unit, as WestVic were finding plenty of space in their forward zone.

Coach, Jason Hargreaves, made several key changes to the line-up for the beginning of the second half, requesting a higher work-rate across the board and tighter man-to-man marking through the midfield in an effort to close down the opposition's space.

Gavin Mann, Leon Judd and round one goal scoring superstar, Nic Don, in defence responded to the coach's call, continually repelling the attacking forays of St Bernards, as they came out firing at the start of the second half in an effort to force their way back into the contest. The knockout blow came 13 minutes into the second half, when WestVic were able to penetrate the circle to win a Penalty Corner, which Nick Hargreaves duly converted to give WestVic an unassailable 4-nil lead.

Jason Hargreaves knocked in a consolation goal from another WestVic penalty corner opportunity 20 minutes into the second half to tie up a solid 5-nil victory for the WestVic men in their first home match of the season.

WestVic sit atop the State League 5 ladder after two rounds and make the gargantuan road trip to Haileybury College this Saturday to take on seasoned State League 5 campaigners, Old Haileybury.

Match Report

Round 3

3rd May 2008 v. Old Haileybury at Haileybury College

Score at Half Time: 1-1

Final Score: 3-2

Goalscorers: Nick Hargreaves (10 Mins), Thomas Walton (48 Mins), Nic Don (60 Mins)

Best: Nathan Hargreaves, Chris Vaughan, Thomas Walton, Allan Burrows, Gavin Mann.

The top of the table *Bendigo Bank* WestVic Hockey Men made State League 5's longest trip last weekend when they travelled to Haileybury College to take on seasoned State League 5 campaigners, Old Haileybury, who were sitting third on the ladder after two rounds.

Old Haileybury hit the WestVic boys hard in the first five minutes of the match, bottling the play up in their attacking half, as WestVic struggled to break free due to the numbers that Old Haileybury were getting to each contest.

As the frenetic start to the match settled, WestVic half backs, Nathan Hargreaves and Gavin Mann and inside forwards Chris Vaughan and Allan Burrows began to find more of the ball and provide a link to the WestVic high forwards. WestVic's trademark speed and sharp ball movement then began to put pressure on the Old Haileybury defence, who conceded the first penalty corner of the match at the seven minute mark. Although Old Haileybury successfully defended WestVic's first scoring opportunity, it couldn't cope with the increased offensive pressure as WestVic danger-man, Nick Hargreaves, was able to find the back of the net in the tenth minute.

After the re-start, Old Haileybury were able to make the most of a breakaway opportunity to slot in a goal in the sixteenth minute, the first goal conceded by WestVic this season. WestVic continued to apply forward pressure, but were unable to break the deadlock prior to the half time break, leaving the teams locked at 1 goal apiece.

Some structural changes in the second half saw WestVic wrest back control of the match, with Old Haileybury struggling to quell the offensive drive created by the WestVic half backs. Thirteen minutes into the second half, the stalemate was broken as WestVic workhorse, Thomas Walton, deftly guided the ball past the right hand side of the Old Haileybury goal keeper.

WestVic persisted with their attacking style, creating holes in the Old Haileybury defence, as the game continued to open up. After several near misses, Nic Don pounced onto a loose ball in the attacking circle to put WestVic 2 goals up with ten minutes to play.

Old Haileybury forced the play into their attacking zone following the third WestVic goal, resulting in an immediate reply, keeping them in the match and forcing WestVic to fight hard if they were to take away the four points. In a pressurised game situation, WestVic were able to hold the play in their attacking half for the remainder of the match, to take away a hard fought win and remain undefeated and atop the ladder after three rounds.

The WestVic Men take on Old Melbourne at the *Bendigo Bank* Ballarat Hockey Centre this Saturday at 2pm.

Match Report

Practice Match

30 March 2008 v. Warrnambool at Warrnambool

Score at Half Time: 3-0

Final Score: 6-0

Goalscorers: Nick Hargreaves (7 Mins), Cheyne Hackett (21 Mins, 28 Mins), Thomas Walton (39 Mins), Gavin Mann (52 Mins, 65 Mins).

Best: Chris Vaughan, Nick Hargreaves, Cheyne Hackett, Gavin Mann.

The WestVic men travelled to Warrnambool for their second practice match of the 2008 pre-season. Wintery conditions met the team on their arrival to Warrnambool in what is sure to be a sign of things to come in Ballarat later this season.

WestVic dominated through the midfield from the beginning of the match, with many scoring opportunities being set up as a result. It wasn't until WestVic's third penalty corner of the match that they were able to convert, through an opportunistic 'knock in' from the right post by Nick Hargreaves.

Continued midfield pressure resulted in further scoring opportunities, with Jeremy Bourke finding the post on one occasion, but it was WestVic first gamer, Cheyne Hackett, who found the back of the net twice to put WestVic 3-nil up at the half time break.

After the half time break, WestVic came out with renewed vigour, aiming to find more structure going into attack in order to make more of their scoring opportunities. 4 Minutes into the second half, WestVic won their first Penalty Corner of the half, which was converted by 'strike man' Thomas Walton who blasted the ball into the backboards, putting WestVic 4-nil up.

Gavin Mann and Chris Vaughan patrolled the half line like generals, repelling the Warrnambool attack time after time and setting up various dangerous counter-attacks, which resulted in many close misses. The continued attacking pressure resulted in a penalty corner, which Gavin Mann was able to convert from the baseline.

5 Minutes from the end of the match, Martin Dowman, found the foot of a defender on the goal line, winning WestVic's first penalty stroke of the season. In form defender, Gavin Mann, stepped up to the spot and ably converted the opportunity to give WestVic a 6-nil scoreline.

With one week to go before the infamous Slazenger Cup against Kew, WestVic will need to improve it's goal shooting conversion, if they are to make sure that they get the result that they are craving.....

WestVic host Kew this coming Saturday afternoon, April 5th, at 3pm, when the Slazenger Cup will be up for grabs.