

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 – WestVic Hockey Senior Men (State League 5)

Round 5

17th May 2008 v. Old Yarra Valley at the *Bendigo Bank* Ballarat Hockey Centre

Score at Half Time: 3-0

Final Score: 5-0

Goalscorers: Ian Edgar (6 Mins), Jeremy Bourke (8 Mins), John Ford (32 Mins), Leon Judd (52 Mins), Brett Marshall (69 Mins).

Best: Jason Hargreaves, no-one else stood out.

The *Bendigo Bank* WestVic Hockey Men consolidated their reputation as the team to beat in Hockey Victoria's State League 5 competition on Saturday, with a comprehensive home ground victory over State League 5 strugglers, Old Yarra Valley.

Despite a new look line up, the WestVic men were able to dominate the play from the opening whistle. Coach, Jason Hargreaves' decision to play Nic Don as goalkeeper paid immediate dividends, with regular goalkeeper, Brett Marshall patrolling the half back line and setting up many forward thrusts. It only took 6 minutes for regular fullback, Ian Edgar, to slot in his first goal of the season to give WestVic an ideal start.

Only two minutes later, Jeremy Bourke, playing on the left wing, proceeded unmanned into the attacking circle to slot away WestVic's second goal of the match, and further push home the advantage of having 11 extra men on the field.

John Ford, who has been showing promise all season with his attacking dash from the half back line, was shifted to right wing just before half time. Given his first opportunity in the forward line this season, Ford was able to slot in a goal just before the half time break, to give WestVic a commanding three goal lead heading into the break.

The majority of the half time break was spent untying Nick Hargreaves from the defensive goalpost, and shifting him to the opposite end of the pitch, to be re-tied to the other goal. This move, together with the decision to play Nic Don in goals, was seen as an important tactic for the match, and had nothing to do with them both being four goals ahead of Coach, Jason Hargreaves, on the WestVic goalscoring ladder.

The second half saw playing coach, Jason Hargreaves come into his own, patrolling the midfield and creating plenty of offensive opportunities. His selfless play was the catalyst behind goals to Leon Judd and also to regular goalkeeper, Brett Marshall. Marshall's goal was particularly impressive, head-butting a hard reverse stick cross from "Thoma-hawk" Walton into the top left hand corner of the net.

So dominating were WestVic in their demolition of Old Yarra Valley, that the opposition did not touch the ball for the entire match. Old Yarra Valley might as well have forfeited, rather than make the daunting trek up the highway to the *Bendigo Bank* Ballarat Hockey Centre.*

The *Bendigo Bank* WestVic Hockey Men travel to Elgar Park this Sunday to take on fellow finals aspirant, Box Hill.

* Old Yarra Valley did, in fact, forfeit the match.

Match Report – WestVic Hockey Senior Men (State League 5)

Round 6

25th May 2008 v. Box Hill at Elgar Park

Score at Half Time: 3-1

Final Score: 5-1

Goalscorers: Jason Hargreaves (10 Mins), Gavin Mann (13 Mins), Thomas Walton (32, 60, 66 Mins)

Best: Chris Vaughan, Leon Judd, Allan Burrows, Gavin Mann, Thomas Walton.

For the first time in 5 weeks, the *Bendigo Bank* WestVic Hockey men relished the opportunity to play a team whose name was not prefixed by the word 'Old', when they took on Box Hill at Elgar Park on Sunday afternoon. Box Hill were sitting sixth on the State League 5 ladder going into the encounter against WestVic, having incurred 3 close losses and a draw in the first six rounds.

Despite being pummelled in the ra-ra-ra's and being further humiliated by losing the toss, Box Hill began the match with intent, piling the pressure on the WestVic defence as they held the play in their attacking half for the first 5 minutes of the match. From the outset, Box Hill flooded numbers into the midfield in an effort to restrict the WestVic ball movement through the middle of the ground. After repelling the Box Hill onslaught for the first 5 minutes, due to the solid defensive work of Gavin Mann and Leon Judd, WestVic picked up a gear, finding an avenue into attack through the wings.

In the 10th minute Jason Hargreaves was able to convert WestVic's second penalty corner of the match, with a hard drive into the corner of the net, to give WestVic a 1-nil lead and put Box Hill on the back foot. WestVic continued to apply attacking pressure, with a Box Hill foul on the goal line giving WestVic a rare penalty stroke opportunity in the 13th minute. Full back, Gavin Mann, duly converted the penalty stroke opportunity to further rattle the Box Hill unit.

The defensive work and counter-attacking moves set up by Allan Burrows and Chris Vaughan saw Box Hill face more attacking pressure before regrouping and forcing the match into an end-to-end affair, as they were able to find a loose player in their attacking midfield to set up a number of attacking moves. When Thomas Walton struck a goal in the 32nd minute, WestVic looked to have broken the Box Hill shackles yet again, but a Box Hill penalty corner converted on the half time whistle, saw Box Hill go into the break only two goals down, with some glimmer of hope.

The first 25 minutes of the second half proved to be a tight struggle, with both teams struggling to break free from the midfield flood. WestVic continued to have the better of the attacking opportunities in the second half, but were unable to convert and put the confident Box Hill unit out of the match. The ever dangerous Thomas Walton was able to slot away two WestVic goals in the space of six minutes to put the result beyond doubt and complete his first hat-trick of the season. Thanks to Walton's starring role, WestVic completed a hard fought 5-1 victory over a team who is clearly better than their position on the ladder would suggest, prompting perhaps the most exuberant rendition of 'Join in the Chorus' so far this season.

Next Saturday at 2pm, the *Bendigo Bank* WestVic Hockey men host the undefeated Old Trinity at the *Bendigo Bank* Ballarat Hockey Centre, in what is billed to be the battle of the State League 5 titans.