

First Grade Match Report:
Glebe Vs North West Strikers
Saturday 23rd of May 2009
Homebush Pitch 2 6:30pm
Result: 2-3

Today was a game of two halves. Glebe played well in the first half, but could not follow up in the second, and ultimately paid the price.

Glebe and Northwest Strikers (NWS) have had some monumental battles in recent years, notably the 2007 preliminary final which NWS won late in the game, going on to win the premiership a week later. In 2008 NWS beat Glebe in the major semi-final, before Glebe returned a fortnight later as underdogs to topple them in a tightly contested Grand Final.

Both sides have had reasonable starts to 2009, though NWS were posted as favourites for today's match-up. Never one to bow to the bookies, Glebe came out in today's game with nothing to lose and played accordingly. NWS rely on a stout defence, headed up by veteran Ronald Charlton. They are generally happy to only defend their own 50m zone, and today fell away from Glebe to this area before engaging the maroons. In the first half Glebe dealt with this quite well, stringing passes together on occasion and finding holes in the NWS defence. One such hole Michael Wark slipped through for an unlikely strike to put Glebe ahead. NWS strikers replied shortly after though on a well taken breakaway goal. Breakaway goals are what NWS like to focus on, and did so well today.

Another attacking raid by Glebe saw the ball hit a NWS defender on the foot on the goal line, and a penalty stroke was duly awarded, then slotted home by Michael Wark, who has taken to this new duty adeptly.

Once again though, Glebe allowed NWS prompt reply. Glebe had an attacking short corner break down (possibly with assistance from a NWS foot) and NWS sprung into attack, using the space and overlap to good effect, putting their lethal forward, Troy Sutherland on top of the circle at the inside right channel. He would make no mistake and the scores were again level, at 2-2. It was a high price to pay, but a valuable lesson may've been learnt from this goal; on such fast breaks the Glebe men should defend the homestead rather than fighting fires at the fence line. A couple of defenders were drawn to the ball carrier up field near the halfway, when they would've been better served retreating to the circle to wait for NWS there. This reduces the ability of the attack to pass the ball around and eliminate the defence, and increases the chances of the cover defence coming back and helping out. One for the future.

The score would remain at 2-2 heading into half time.

Talk centred on maintaining better possession and bringing midfield into the game more. This unfortunately was not implemented, and in fact the second half saw Glebe play worse than the first. The midfield saw less and less ball, with Glebe trying to go too quickly into attack with rushed passes and long hits turning over possession time after time. It may've

been fitness, panic or a reaction to the trouble the Glebe midfield was having. But whatever the cause, the effect did not work, and NWS enjoyed a wealth of field position and possession. But funnily enough, zero short corners. As with last week, the Glebe defence put in an admirable effort when it didn't have the ball, repelling wave after wave of Sioux Warriors, but as with last week, the Glebe defence fell agonisingly short. NWS caught the defence napping and scored an opportunistic goal with less than four minutes remaining. The weight of possession had eventually taken its toll.

What ball the Glebe midfield did see was not highly prized enough, with passing being eschewed in favour of one out efforts (perhaps due to lack of options?) and passing not up to standard once again. At times it seemed the brave lads were charging out of the trenches and tearing 110% into the face of the enemy guns. Courageous but ineffective.

By falling away to the 50m mark NWS compress their defence and the space in which Glebe had to work accordingly. Side to side transfers using fullbacks and the half line had some success. Strikers need to pull higher and widen the lines. This creates space for the halves and inners to move into as well as space for the strikers to move into when the time is ripe. Many times on Saturday the wingers were sucked back toward the ball in one-on-one battles reminiscent of an AFL marking contest. Invariably the NWS defender seemed to get front position, or at least get a stick in the play and break down the flow of passing. When Glebe began to try and take on the defence solo this played into the hands of NWS, who may've had their first defender beaten, but few players can eliminate three in a row, and Glebe found this difficult today. Mounting a successful attack in the face of such stacked defence is a question for the hockey-heads and strategists out there. All suggestions would be welcomed and can be directed to your author or First Grade Coach, Geoff "The Snake" Paterson.

Players Player: Today was actually a game of three halves. The third being Glebe's centre half, Alistair Cullen. When afforded some possession Alistair did well with it, creating attacking opportunities through his incisive passing and doing much for the Glebe defensive cause through good field position and marking. The more touches Al gets, the better Glebe goes, so they should try and find him as much as possible.

Regards,

Patrick Wark.

3rd Grade:

GLEBE vs North-West Strikers

Saturday 23rd of May 2009

RESULT: Glebe 2-1

Glebe continued its good run of results in recent weeks by convincingly defeating NWS Strikers, partially atoning for our embarrassing 2nd round defeat to them in 2008 which pretty much put us out of the running for a semi-final spot. NWS Strikers started promisingly by scoring a goal from a Glebe error from the hit off not 10 seconds after the game had started. Great going guys.

From here, Glebe responded by dominating possession and field position and creating some very good opportunities very early on in the game. Holmzey and Campo were able to bring the ball up-field without being pressured and utilise the wing halves, Princess and Lovechild almost at will. This however meant that Matt Brokenback was marked out of the game for long periods but he was still able to turn on the boyish charm on occasion to start some probing attacks. Alex Sheard, voted Player's Player for the 3rd time this season, again absolutely dominated and was at the forefront of all our attacking moves. Scott Bortfield added to his season's goal tally with a well taken opportunity late in the first half. Glebe dominated the half although were only 1-1 at half time.

The second half was more of the same with the young blokes, Will I Am and Son of Lovechild, gaining in confidence and contributing to the attack on our right side. Paulie Hamstrung Jowett finally put Glebe into the lead after about 50 minutes with a surprisingly sweetly hit cracking shot to the bottom left corner of the goal. Strikers then through caution to the wind and pushed extra men forward. Glebe should have responded to this by falling away somewhat and ensuring that the extra high attackers were picked up and to condense the available space in the midfield. Glebe instead pressed high in defence and Strikers were able to find available players free in the midfield and this resulted in the Glebe defence being placed under unnecessary pressure for the remainder of the game. Strikers threatened the Glebe goal and won a number of goals but fortunately were unable to convert. Glebe stumbled over the line in the end 2-1 after they had dominated three quarters of the game. Hopefully, this is all part of the learning curve for the younger players in the team and that they begin to understand the need to alter tactics and strategy as a game unfolds.

Last year's premiers Ryde next week. Should be another cracker.

Adam Campano