

First Grade Match Report

Glebe Vs Gordon-North Sydney

Saturday 4th March 2009 Homebush Pitch 2 6:30pm.

Result: 2-2

Glebe were well aware that a continuation of their mediocre performances in the first two games would lead to a most unfortunate result against this weeks opponents, Gordon-North Sydney (GNS). GNS are a side who persistently threaten to make a finals appearance and frequently trouble top-4 teams with their harassing defensive style and quick counter-attack.

Early in the match GNS were in the ascendance, controlling the ball well around the back and on occasions when Glebe did make attacking forays GNS often managed to counter quickly, causing problems for the Glebe defence. GNS had a couple of sprightly European additions to their forward line from last season who combined dangerously with some of their younger players. During the opening quarter it seemed a case of not 'if' but 'when' GNS would open the account and run away with the match. But after some initial lapses it became evident that Glebe's defensive structure had improved in no small measure from their previous outings. Once they settled in the back four were able to deal with the fast breaks and interchanging forwards in a more satisfactory manner this week. Substitute Coach Colin 'Rocky' Rochester suggested some subtle changes which when implemented paid substantial dividends.

The defence's efforts were not helped however by repeated turnovers and loose passing by the forwards, who were too keen on scoring off every single play. Possession builds pressure and field position, which in turn allows circle penetrations, short corners, shots and goals. Attempting to find the net directly from every play inevitably leads to soft-turnovers and a lot of ball chasing.

Midway through the first half GNS used their gifted imbalance in possession to force a short-corner which was clinically converted to put themselves 1-0 in front.

Some enterprising play by Glebe from the restart saw them rapidly get on the front foot and enter the attacking zone. A sharp pass from Patrick Casey on the sideline found Michael Wark in the circle and he scored off a well taken shot to equalise only moment's after GNS had edged ahead. This gave Glebe a big confidence boost, as GNS early ascendancy had been nullified.

From this point the game became more evenly matched, though Glebe continued to let themselves down by repeatedly turning over the ball as they transitioned into attack. These turnovers were largely due to poor fundamentals in passing and receiving – at this level the pass must be flat, swift (in selection, execution and delivery) and be directed to where the receiver requires. Equally however, the receiver must be able to trap almost anything thrown their way, control the ball quickly and be aware of what their best option now is. The forward line must also better assess the attacking situation and not pursue all-out-attacking options when field position and defensive/attacking numbers dictate a more measured approach. If there is a sea of opposing players in front of you it is likely the opposite side of the field will be a better attacking option. Or, if it is a fast break and the defence have adequately scrambled "live to fight another day" (K.Wark Jnr) and pass the ball backwards and re-lead.

GNS' second goal five minutes before half time was an opportunistic one, albeit extremely well taken. A contentious free-hit for Gordon was awarded five yards from the top of the circle. More than one Glebe defender was disputing the call with the umpire and the remaining defence did not adequately protect the circle perimeter. This left a crafty opponent free to self-pass and hot-foot it into the circle to crack a screamer into the opposite side-board from the inside right channel. A momentary lapse of concentration had been capitalised on and Glebe were again on the wrong side of the score-sheet.

At half-time Glebe remained composed as they were reasonably happy with their performance thus far, with some obvious exceptions. They resolved to put more pressure on the GNS defence and in turn attempt to maintain better possession in their own defensive third.

The tweaks to the Glebe game-plan had good effect. Increased pressure on the GNS defence lead to turnovers and promising attacking raids. Bringing the ball out from the back Glebe played with more patience and better execution, not pushing the pass if it wasn't on. The side looked especially good when it used Alistair Cullen at Centre Half, who was making good position and taking good options when he gained possession. Any hockey side with a good centre half should use him as much as possible, and Glebe looked most dangerous when Cullen was directing play from amidships.

The Dirty Reds dominating proceedings for much of the second half, with improved communication, transitioning and marking at the back not allowing GNS to build any meaningful attack. Sam Noller had a particularly strong game, making plenty of tackles and distributing well once he had gained possession. Gaining good service from the defence the Glebe forwards made many circle penetrations, forced short corners and created chances on goal. With better finishing Glebe would have seen themselves two or three goals in front but with less than ten minutes remaining were still staring down the barrel of a 2-1 defeat.

But with a Maroon Shirt on the players would never say die and kept fighting. To their credit they still stuck to the game plan, playing a more attacking style but at the same time maintaining both defensive and attacking structure. GNS seemed to content themselves with falling back and defending, or perhaps that was all they could manage against a much improved second half performance from the Glebe team. Whatever the case, patience in possession and good ball movement forced numerous short corners. One of which was finally buried by Michael Wark with six minutes remaining on the clock to draw the scores level at 2-2. This gave the Glebe team added impetus, and other shots were had, but none could find the back of the net.

The score would remain 2-2 at fulltime. Glebe can be happy with a much improved performance, but with a little better finishing they would've come away victorious. The side can now enjoy a rest over the Easter weekend before welcoming back the Paterson Brothers and Matthew Wark from NSW representative duties for the double header weekend on the 18/19th of April.

Players Player: Michael Wark narrowly edged out Al Cullen, both of whom deserved their points.

Regards Patrick Wark.

THIRD GRADE MATCH REPORT

4 APRIL 2009

Result: Glebe 2-1

The Glebe 'cardiac kids' were at it again producing a heart stopping one goal win against the GNS boys. Let's just put it out there early by saying Glebe totally dominated this game from the first minute to the last. Our goalie, Jack Stocker, did not have a touch in the first half. GNS won only two penalty corners all game and managed to convert the second one in the second half with a nice slice hit to the bottom right corner where the Glebe left postie should have been. Glebe had possibly 1000 circle penetrations and about 20 penalty corners and struggled to put two pretty average and soft goals away during the course of the 70 minutes.

This is not to say that the side didn't play well. Indeed, everyone in the team played terrific hockey, more so because GNS allowed our wing halves and inners a ridiculous amount of space to receive the ball and then move into space. Thank you very much for that boys. I hope you are just as accommodating in the second round match. Alex Sheard dominated the midfield and the wing halves, Dan and Campo, found themselves with more room than they'd had all season to run into attacking positions. Will Noller again impressed up front as did Scott Bortfield who showed some nice touches. The back 4 were very solid today and kept the defensive structure together which the Captain, Peter Busch, has tried to instil within the team. However, again Glebe lacked a killer instinct and could not put GNS away on the score board. The score could have been anything and in the end we were all very relieved to get the win and to sing the team song for the second time this season.

Player's Player: Alex Sheard

FOURTH GRADE MATCH REPORT-

4TH APRIL

Glebe 2 d Gordon North Sydney 1

This game was a hard fought and gritty game, and it was a credit to the team to win a close contest on the day. There were some similarities to the first couple of games, which ended up with draws, and it was great to eke out a better result this time.

Given the introduction, it was felt that the result was fair, as Glebe had more opportunities and more field position than GNS. The first goal was from a short corner, capitalising on the weight of possession. GNS equalised after half time, but Glebe were able to soon bounce back to get the winner, a well taken field goal involving numerous passes. There were more half chances towards the end of the game, but a third goal did not arrive.

The team is starting to combine quite well, and is recently adopting to the rule changes, and it seems to be blending into a nice mix of older heads and youth, and may yet challenge for the flag.

SEVENTH GRADE REPORT

4 APRIL 2009

7th Grade fielded an under strength team against an improved Bentsix team from 2008, to get a 5-5 draw at Concorde. Much to the teams credit we trailed Benstix for much of the game by one goal, then to take the lead 5-4 going into the last 5 minutes, only to lose the win in the last play of the game. While it is a disappointing result to not have secured the win, the team showed great fortitude and belief to come back 4 times to tie the scores and then take the lead.

All in all we didn't take all our chances and a few mistakes at the back cost us the result. We will be looking to build and move forward from here for a successful 2009 season.

With Kind Regards,

Gareth Mair

EIGHTH GRADE REPORT

4 APRIL 2009

Game 2 for 8th grade was against Benstix at Cintra on Saturday 4 April. Despite receiving numerous penalty corners in attack, 8th grade failed to score in the first half and went into the half time break with the score at 0-0. In the second half 8th grade finally got on the score board with Simon Rickards scoring off a penalty corner. The final score was 1-0 to Glebe.

Owen Bailey