

Men's AHG League Match Report – Round 17

Westside Wolves (5) defeated Fremantle (1)

Saturday 17 July 2010 – 5:30pm @ Shenton Turf

Fresh from a solid win over Guildford last week, the Wolfpack gathered in their natural habitat at Shenton to face off against a Fremantle side desperate to win to avoid a relegation battle later in the year. Maurice Curwen was welcomed back from a "hamstring injury" - a handy inclusion given the absence of Jason Wilson and Mark Paterson due to international commitments. Jack Williams joined Maurice in the forward group as a reward for his goal-scoring brilliance in the 2's, while Steve Eskinazi slotted into the back four as an extra half-back to replace Graham "John Travolta" Watts, who decided flying planes was more important than winning hockey games.

Jono "Jesus" Charlesworth managed to arrive on time this week and his pre-match talk focused on fast ball movement, continual re-leading from midfielders and defensive pressure starting from the front three. As expected, the game had tension from the very first whistle, with a green card to a player from each side due to some rather funny sledging within 5 minutes. Wolves were dominating possession, but a combination of poor execution in the forward 25, and resolute defending from Freo had the score locked at 0-0 until well into the first half. Finally, Shepherd was able to fashion an opening, and after driving the left hand baseline, he calmly pulled the ball back to goalsneak Nathan Eglington who deflected the ball first-time past the keeper after standing unmarked for what seemed like 30 seconds.

This goal seemed to spark the Wolfpack into life, and before too long it was 2-0 via a Ben "Red Pen" Donisi flick from a short corner, and 3-0 after Eglington stole the ball in an aggressive press and unselfishly passed to Russell Hartley to knock it in on the second attempt.

At half-time, Jesus challenged the boys to finish the game strongly, encouraging us to stick to the basics to pile on a big win. Things were looking good when a neat short corner move was flicked low and hard into the backboard by Jason "3-2-1" Black, and then Shepherd got a well-deserved goal after great overlapping by Donisi. However, rather than driving home the advantage, Wolves slackened off, and allowed Freo back into the game despite the 5-0 scoreline. Frustration crept into the Wolves line-up, and a lack of discipline saw three players taking 5 minute breathers courtesy of the umpires at various times in the 2nd half. Having only 10 players on the field for a total of 20-odd minutes of the game gave Freo plenty of chances to score, and goalie George Watts was left with little chance when an unmarked Freo forward deflected over him from point blank range late in the game.

Although the 5-1 victory looked comfortable, the team was a little disappointed not to have finished off as strongly as we had started, especially given the task ahead of the boys this week – a grudge match against top side Hale on Sunday afternoon at the Perth Hockey Stadium minus Wilson, Paterson and Eglington.

Cheers,
Russell Hartley