

Port vs Sollies Round 1, 2016.

Port – 10.9=69

Lions – 10.5=65

The game had finally arrived after starting our pre -season early February, our squad was ready to see if all things talked about could be put into place.

Recruiting had gone well in the off season with numerous new faces to the club including ; James Gruitt, Adam Smith, Josh Byerlee, Jacob Cappeletto, Michael Mills, Sam Keane, Sam Powell, Jacob Neary, Dave Hissey, and Matt Ramsey.

The B grade came together with a different squad from 2015 and showed better structure throughout the game. In a hard contest the group managed to be down 3 goals in the last quarter and fight back to lose by a point in the last 20 seconds. Blair (B grade coach) will have something to work from and improvement and depth for the A grade with solid performances from Nelson Ferme and Jarrad Adams.

The A grade was focussed on working as a team and how individuals could bring their skills and be part of this. We had various players unavailable due to injury. The first quarter was very promising with quick delivery by hand and foot and the scoreboard ticking along. Reducing our turnovers was a real focus at training and this would help stop quick attacks from the opposition. Sam Dignan and Sam Clarke were doing their best to stop their ruckman and limit his hit out advantage.

The second quarter there was less physical effort and a drop away from our skill delivery. At certain times we would centre the ball to the middle of the ground and this would put immense pressure on our defence. Tim Byerlee, Zak Hutchinson and Jayden Corrieri were consistent with their efforts.

The third quarter was about lifting our intensity and kicking 3 or 4 goals in a row before the opposition attacked back. Our delivery into our forward line needs more work so players like Brett Woodards and Brad Inglis can have better opportunity one on one or with space behind them.

The last quarter was an opportunity for our club to start the year with a win and a win by 5 goals. This was looking promising in the first half of the quarter but some misjudgements by our players let the opposition take control and come back at each opportunity. A learning development from this game is that standing up for each other is paramount and something we need to get better at as a club but when we are protecting a winning margin our concentration needs to be on the ball. Our defence was under immense pressure and our half forwards/wingman, onballers were not making the effort to push back and block the holes needed. We did manage to get the 2 points and start our season with a win but I am realistic that we have more improvement in our game plan and individual skills.

Things that we took from this game include :

- Need to improve on our delivery into our forward line
- Turnovers need to be a focus and reduced each game
- Concentration until the end of the game is needed or this brings about lost opportunities
 - The better players for the day included James Gruitt (centre), Shannon Snook (on ball), Zak Hutchinson (half back), Jayden Correr (back pocket) and Sam Keane on the wing.

Looking forward to play West and cutting out their key goal kickers and runners.

Cheers

Damien Mellow (A Grade Coach).