

## **SAINTS FAIRYTALE FINISH**

Saints completed a rags to riches story as they held off Eagles to claim premiership glory in a classic game of baseball in the Sunraysia Baseball League A Grade competition.

Finishing in last place in 2008, new coach Glenn Wallace turned the club around in 2009 and with a hard fought victory over favourites Eagles, Saints' fairytale season was complete.

The match saw the two best teams of this season do battle. Saints were at full strength but Eagles were missing Trent Perry who didn't recover from an arm injury and his place was taken by Lachlan Fuda.

Eagles began with Matt Austin on the mound and although he issued a two out walk to Chris Prevedello, Saints couldn't score. Saints started with Dean Fairlie after his strong performance in the preliminary final last week. He hit the first batter—Adam Bell—but retired the next three to shut Eagles down.

Austin shut down Saints in order in both the second and third digs, recording four strikeouts along the way. Eagles were then first on the scoreboard in the bottom of the third innings. Bell received his second hit by pitch, Ben Harris bunted him over and Matt Jones hit a deep fly to score Bell. Ben Heagerty smacked a double and then Jedd Miller hit safely as Eagles put two runs on the board.

Saints replied with one run of their own in the top of the fourth dig as Prevedello hit safely, Andrew Fairlie walked and Ben Kerr's bunt was errored by Eagles to plate Saints first run.

Austin was starting to tire and issued two walks in the top of the fifth innings but got out of the jam by striking out Prevedello to end the threat. Wallace replaced Fairlie on the mound for Saints and although he walked Jones, he struck out Heagerty and Miller to keep Saints close.

The sixth innings saw Saints level the scores. Andrew Fairlie whacked a lead-off double and Tony Trinick's safe hit moved Fairlie to third base. With split runners Trinick attempted to steal second and Eagles chose to throw him out. Whilst they were doing this Fairlie came home from third and the scores were tied at two-apiece.

Saints then made their move against the tiring Austin in the top of the seventh dig. Safe hits to Dean Fairlie, Wallace, Shane Trinick and Andrew Fairlie saw Saints score two runs to take the lead. Eagles tried to reply in the bottom of the innings as Heagerty and Miller hit well but Wallace remained calm and ended the innings.

Miller was now on the mound for Eagles and he shut Saints down in the eighth innings. Austin hit safely and Bell walked to put the tying runs on base for Eagles but Wallace again snuffed out the threat to preserve Saints' two run lead.

Saints went quietly in the ninth and Eagles were down to their last chance. Jones worked a walk to get things started and Heagerty hit safely to again put the tying runs on base. A passed ball moved the runners to second and third and Eagles were in a great spot to tie the match.

Miller grounded out to second base and then a dribbler to third base from Andrew Law was mishandled by Saints. A run scored and the tying run was now at third base with just the one out. Eagles looked certain to bunt home the tying run but failed to do so and the resulting strikeout put Saints one out from victory.

Wallace induced the ground ball from the next batter and his fielders made the third out to preserve the nail-biting 4-3 win to Saints as they claimed 2009 premiership glory.

The player of the match was awarded to Saints' Glenn Wallace.

In B Grade favourites Wanderers overpowered Eagles to win 12-3. In a fiery match, Wanderers broke open a tight match early as in the second and third digs they scored eleven runs. The high scoring Eagles' side couldn't come to terms with the pitching of Travis McLean as they could only manage five hits over five innings to score just three runs.

McLean, Tony Malycha, Brett Bertalli and Ryan Russell played well for Wanderers with Steven Scott, Roger Taylor and Clint Minette batting well for Eagles.

The player of the match was awarded to Wanderers' pitcher Travis McLean.

In C Grade Eagles tasted success with a hard fought 4-2 win over Wanderers Two. Eagles took the early lead and then held off Wanderers to record the win and grab the silverware.

Tim Bell, Steven Edwards and Jayden Austin played well for Eagles with Kelly Morrison, Marcus Jeanes and Brett Bertalli doing well for Wanderers.

The player of the match was awarded to Eagles' Tim Bell.

## **RESULTS**

### **A GRADE**

**SAINTS:** - 0 0 0 1 0 1 2 0 0—4

**EAGLES:** - 0 0 2 0 0 0 0 0 1—3

**SAFE HITS:** - Saints—A Fairlie and D Fairlie 2; G Wallace, S Trinick, C Prevedello and T Trinick 1.

Eagles—B Heagerty and J Miller 3; L Fuda 2; A Law and M Austin 1.

### **B GRADE**

**WANDERERS:** - 0 5 6 0 1—12

**EAGLES:** - 0 0 2 1 0—3

**SAFE HITS:** - Wanderers—T Malycha and B Bertalli 2; T Plumridge, T McLean, L Howard and R Russell 1.

Eagles—C Minette 2; S Scott, R Taylor and J Austin 1.

**C GRADE**

**EAGLES:** - 2 0 1 1 0 X—4

**WANDERERS TWO:** - 0 0 0 0 1 1—2

**SAFE HITS:** - Eagles—T Bell and J Austin 2; S Edwards, J Parmenter, K Nankivell and M Pay 1.

Wanderers—K Morrison 2; R Witte, B Lever, M Jeanes, G Witte and J Ashcroft 1.