

SAINTS ROLL TO TOP OF LADDER

Saints outplayed Wanderers to take the points and Hawks played out a nail biting draw with Eagles in Round Three action of the Sunraysia Baseball League A Grade competition.

Saints played host to Wanderers at Chaffey Park with both sides looking for a win. Saints were missing coach Glenn Wallace and promoted youngster Ethan Gray for his first A Grade match. Wanderers were missing Jay Fleming but welcomed back Dion Tregeagle in a surprise return.

Saints began with Dean Fairlie on the mound and he started well by shutting down Wanderers in order. Saints were facing Tregeagle and although Shane Trinnick led off with a hit, he was picked off and Saints also went in order.

Matt Gee and Brad McGrath hit safely in the second dig as Wanderers loaded the bases with two out but Fairlie knuckled down to strike out the side and keep Wanderers off the scoreboard. Saints took the early lead when Drew Hosking then hit safely to knock in the first run.

Nick Carroll hit safely to begin the third dig for Wanderers but Fairlie induced the double play ball to end the innings. He then found his groove and recorded thirteen outs in a row as Wanderers failed to come to terms with Fairlie's good pitching and Wanderers were blanked through seven innings.

Over the same period Saints extended their lead to seven runs. Although Tregeagle struck out nine bloop hits to Ben Kerr, Dean Fairlie and Chris Prevedello were complimented by line drive hits to Ethan Gray and Hosking as Saints piled on the scoreboard pressure.

Dean Fairlie was given a well deserved rest after seven innings of shut-out ball, with eight strikeouts. Brother Andrew negotiated the eighth dig and Ben Kerr was brought in to close out the ninth. Wanderers added some respectability to the scoreboard as Charlie Fleri, Troy Kortekaas and McGrath hit safely but it was too little too late and Saints claimed the 8-3 victory.

Eagles and Hawks did battle and a win to either would give them top spot. Eagles made no change to their starting lineup but Hawks were without Scott Giles and Aaron McGlashan and brought in Dylan Smith and Ben Barker.

Clint Williams started on the mound for Hawks and although Adam Bell hit the first pitch of the game for a double, Williams retired Eagles for no score. Hawks were facing Eagles' Trent Perry and he ran into immediate trouble. Four walks combined with safe hits to Matt Smith and Tony Probert saw Hawks score three runs.

Eagles replied with two runs of their own as Jedd Miller, Tim Press and Ben Harris hit safely. Hawks added their fourth run when Dylan Smith's safe hit capitalized on two more walks from Perry.

Eagles then stormed into the lead in the third innings as they scored four runs as Miller, Clint Minette, Press and Harris all hit well. Hawks clawed back one run as Matt Smith knocked in Hawks' fifth run.

The fourth innings saw more scoring. Miller's third safe hit helped Eagles score their seventh run but Hawks replied with interest. Miller was now on the mound taking over from Perry and Hawks took to him. Safe hits to Michael Wade, Dylan Smith, Ben Barker and Williams saw Hawks score four runs and take a 9-7 lead.

A high scoring match then slowed down as the defense of both sides took control. Eagles scored one run in the sixth and one more in the seventh off new Hawks' pitcher Matt Smith to level the scores as the intensity of the match went up a notch or two.

Eagles came and went in the eighth dig and Hawks had one last chance to win the game. Port Pirie's Nathan Lynch had been roped in for a game and he doubled down the left field line to put the winning run at second base. Matt Smith hit safely to advance Lynch to third and Hawks were in prime position to win.

The ensuing bunt were horribly wrong and Eagles couldn't believe their luck as Lynch was tagged out at home and Smith was then tagged out at third and the double play ended the innings and left the scores locked at 9 runs apiece.

The Mildura Sports Centre A Grade player of the week is awarded to Saints pitcher Dean Fairlie. He pitched a three-hit shutout through seven digs and led his side to a win over Wanderers.

In B Grade Wanderers came from behind to win a thriller over Eagles 5 runs to four. Tim Plumridge, Daniel Hayes and Ryan Russell played well for Wanderers with Roger Taylor, Zac Schurr and Tim Bell getting Eagles safe hits.

The second match saw Hawks defeat Tigers 10-4. Josh Hall, Chris Irons and Aaron McGlashan played well for Hawks whilst Matt Boston and Ethan Keating picked Tigers' only safe hits.

The Mallee Burger B Grade player of the week is awarded to Wanderers' outfielder Daniel Hayes. He had two hits and drove in the winning run for his side against Eagles.

In C Grade Saints and Wanderers Two played out an exciting 8-all draw. Glen Kelly, Allan Gourlay and Dan Prevedello played well for Saints with Kelly Morrison, Charlie Ashcroft and Ross Witte playing well for Wanderers.

The second match saw Tigers defeat Hawks Two 13-3. Matt Johns, Ian Gill and Justin Smith played well for Tigers with Dylan Cross, Casey Andersen and Peter Grambau playing well for Hawks.

The third match saw Eagles thump Hawks One 11-6. Tim Bell, Ben Gathercole and Kris Nankivell played well for Eagles with Corey Barbary, Dylan Rickard and Paul Holman playing well for Hawks.

The Mallee Burger C Grade player of the week is awarded to Tigers pitcher Matt Johns. He pitched seven innings and kept Hawks to five hits and just three runs in his side's win over Hawks.

RESULTS

A GRADE

SAINTS: - 0 1 2 0 0 1 3 1 X

WANDERERS: - 0 0 0 0 0 0 1 2—3

SAFE HITS: - Saints—S Trinnick and D Hosking 2; D Fairlie, C Prevedello, B Kerr, S Haffenden and E Gray 1.

Wanderers—B McGrath 2; N Carroll, M Gee, C Fleri and T Kortekaas 1.

HAWKS: - 3 1 1 4 0 0 0 0—9

EAGLES: - 0 2 4 1 0 1 1 0—9

SAFE HITS: - Hawks—M Smith 3; D Smith 2; C Williams, N Lynch, T Cross, M Wade, T Probert and B Barker 1.

Eagles—J Miller 4; T Press and B Harris 2; A Bell, B Heagerty, C Minette and L Fuda 1.

B GRADE

WANDERERS: - 0 0 0 3 0 0 2—5

EAGLES: - 2 0 0 1 1 0 0—4

SAFE HITS: - Wanderers—D Hayes and T Plumridge 2; D Twaddle, T McLean, R Russell and M Withnell 1.

Eagles—R Taylor 3; Z Schurr 2; T Bell 1.

HAWKS: - 2 2 2 2 2—10

TIGERS: - 1 0 3 0 0—4

SAFE HITS: - Hawks—C Irons 2; K Smith and J Hall 1.

Tigers—M Boston and E Keating 1.

C GRADE

SAINTS: - 0 4 0 1 0 3—8

WANDERERS TWO: - 2 0 1 0 5 0—8

SAFE HITS: - Saints—G Kelly 3; A Gourlay and D Prevedello 2; W Copeman, J Doyle and J Brook 1.

Wanderers—K Morrison and C Ashcroft 2; R Witte and S Malycha 1.

TIGERS: - 4 0 1 5 3 0 0—13

HAWKS TWO: - 1 2 0 0 0 0 0—3

SAFE HITS: - Tigers—I Gill 4; J Fitzgerald, L Boston, J Smith and M Johns 2; C Johns, M French and B Purgar 1.

Hawks—P Pain, J Gregory, C Andersen, D Cross and P Grambau 1.

EAGLES: - 5 3 0 2 5—15

HAWKS ONE: - 2 2 0 2 0—6

SAFE HITS: - Eagles—T Bell 4; B Gathercole, K Nankivell and L Fuda 2; C Alderton, K Roberts and M Pay 1.
Hawks—C Barbary and D Rickard 3; P Holman 2; B Neaylon, W Dowson and T Rickard 1.