Port notes Preliminary Final

After a disheartening 30-point loss to arch rivals in the Lindisfarne Two Blues for a spot in the Grand Final, the Southern Storm Colts went into the Preliminary final against strong competitors the Hobart Tigers in what was a do or die match.  Both teams extremely eager to secure the final spot in the Grand Final. The conditions of the day were less than ideal, with strong cross ground winds, and on and off misty rain. These key weather elements mixed with the rather thin layer of grass, made the ground extremely slippery and transition up the ground a difficult task for both teams. The first term saw the young Tigers coming out more determined, the Tigers were using the wind to their advantage and locking the football in their forward 50. The Storm defenders fought hard and made the best of the hand they were dealt, laying numerous smothers as well as applying immense pressure on the football. Kade Francis again was key early on, providing refined ruckwork as well as taking a number of strong overhead marks to help the Storm clear the football out of their defensive half. The Storm were able to lock the football down for the last half of the first quarter but were unable to reflect it on the score board. At the quarter time break, the Hobart Tigers were to have the jump on the Storm, with a leading margin of 6 points. (SS – 0.2.2 – HT – 1.2.8).    
  
With a chance to catch their breath and to compose themselves, the Storm had time to reflect on what they knew was going to be a good start by Hobart. With the wise and inspiring words of coaches Cameron Ashlin and Andrew ‘Pup’ Lovell, the boys took the field and immediately turned the tables around. The midfield brigade consisting of Kade Francis, Josh Coad, George O’Neill, Murray Bastick and two under 16 young gun wingers in Elijah Cowen and Will Clifford came busting out of the blocks, getting the football down into what proved to be the scoring end, where Kayne Wouters managed to get the Storm onto the board early in the quarter, with an exceptional pack weaving goal. The Storm’s midfield brigade stepped up the pressure to the next level and managed to get things falling into place with O’Neill and Cowen linking up well to get the ball into the hands of Luke Paton who became a dominate force in the forward line, kicking two majors for the quarter. Blake Sculthorpe showed the Tigers that the wet and greasy conditions were not to bother, taking a spectacular one handed grab which resulted in a goal. The Storms defenders were able to work hard throughout the entire quarter to ensure the football stayed locked in the Storms forward line. Unfortunately, a goal in transition was to slip through the cracks. The pressure and intensity of the Storm was really ramped up through tackle pressure as well as the shepherds. Jonte Fahey was able to lay an exceptional double bump shepherd that resulted in a goal to O’Neill late in the second. At the Half time break the Storm were able to fix their mistakes of the first and take a 3 goal lead. (SS-5.3.33 – HT – 2.3.15)   
  
At half time, the Storm had the fire in their bellies and weren’t ready to give up this fight, they were ready to take the opportunity that was in front of them. The usual classy ruckwork of Francis proved vital to the success of the Storm, giving Coad and O’Neill every opportunity to get the football going the Storms way. Paton proved to be a big presence, taking numerous strong grabs during his time in the forward line as well as getting his name into the paper for the third time for the day. The strong sets of hands between Francis, Ashlin and O’Neill made life very difficult for the Tigers defenders, with the trio marking everything that was trying to be cleared out of the Tigers backline. Elijah Cowen provided the Storm an exceptional amount of run, skill and composure which enhanced the Storms centre clearance abilities, despite the subpar conditions. To top off Cowen’s exceptional efforts all across the ground, he was able to get the reward he deserved, kicking a true crumbers goal. Luke Paton was able to use his size and speed throughout the midfield, giving not only the forwards first option of the football, but also working hard across the centre line to keep the football in the Storms attacking half. George O’Neill too played a key role in the success for the quarter, with his hard ball gets mentality combined with his sheer size and strength, made him an extremely tough person to stop in his tracks. The football knowledge and ability of young Will Clifford proved too difficult to stop, with Clifford being able to kick a well-deserved goal to seal off the third quarter, despite playing off a wing. The Storm were able to battle hard and keep the Tigers to just two points for the term. (SS-8.6.54 – HT-2.5.17)   
  
The three quarter time huddle saw the boys pumped up and raring to make this game theirs for the taking. But in the other huddle, so were the young Tigers. The Tigers showed the Storm they weren’t out of the game just yet, with the Tigers kicking the first goal of the term. The Storm were quick to respond with Murray Bastick smashing the packs and finding plenty of the football to get the footy up into the hands of Jonte Fahey, who was consistent throughout the entire day, taking numerous marks as well as laying some big shepherds and tackles. Fahey was able to respond to Hobarts goal with a strong overhead mark in the greasy conditions that resulted in a goal. A few goals again through transition slipped through the cracks of the Storms defence, but the intensity of the Storm wasn’t going anywhere. The Storm fought extremely hard and Luke Ashlin ensured his team didn’t let these goals go unanswered for, with Ashlin fighting hard all day and being exceptionally clean when the ball was in his hands. Ashlin alongside the midfield contingent of Francis, Coad, O’Neill and Murray Bastick never stopped running, with Bastick being able to crumb his own football from the centre half backline, all the way to the the full forward, where he was to soccer an unreal goal between 4 defenders in the rain. In the dying minutes of the 4th, Luke Paton was able to kick a magnificent on the run goal from the centre square to boost the boys. Not long after, the siren sounded and the boys were able to achieve what they had set out to do from the start of the year... to make the Grand Final. The Storm were able to run away with a 39-point victory over strong competitors in Hobart. The efforts of the boys were exceptional and hopefully the boys can carry this momentum into next week’s big dance! Final Score: Southern Storm 11.8.-74 def Hobart 5.5.-35.   
  
Better players for the day include: Kade Francis, Luke Paton, George O’Neill, Elijah Cowen, Josh Coad, and Luke Ashlin.   
  
Goal kickers for the day include: Luke Paton 4, and singles to George O’Neill, Elijah Cowen, Blake Sculthorpe, Will Clifford, Kayne Wouters, Murray Bastick, and Jonte Fahey;   
  
  
  
GRAND FINAL PREVIEW:  
The Southern Storm Colts are set to take part in their third consecutive Grand Final this weekend the 14th of September at 9 am at North Hobart. The Storm are really looking to turn the tables after being unsuccessful in the previous two Grand Finals. Lindisfarne and Southern Storm are no stranger to a meet in September, with Lindisfarne unfortunately getting over the Strom last year. With a new year and both teams having a number of new players, the Storm are looking to bring the flag back down South in what is set out to be a spectacular game.   
Although The Storm prides itself on being a one in all in team, The Storm have been able to bring a number of key players into their side from a range of age groups. To name a few: George O’Neill – George has played with the Storm his whole career, but in recent years has been playing both in the Colts as well as the Cygnet Seniors. George is a tough competitor and has a solid frame.   
Luke Paton- Luke played all his junior football at The North Hobart football club, before moving down to Cygnet this year to play with his mates Will Polley and Samuel Ryan. Luke has played a number of Colts games throughout the year, having a strong presence in the forward line, as well as playing this season with the Cygnet Seniors. Luke too is a fierce competitor and has a solid frame.   
Jacob Burnett – Jacob has played his whole life with the Southern Storm. Jacob is a tough as nails defender that is not afraid of any contest.   
Josh Coad- Josh is fearless and always goes into the contest hard. Last years winner of the SFL Lipscombe medal for best and fairest colts player in the competition. He is a great inside player and never shy’s from getting the ball.   
This list could go on and on as the Storm really prides itself on not being a group of individuals.   
Key Match ups: Lindisfarne are a quality well drilled side that have next to no passengers within their team. The Storm does not take any of their players lightly so theoretically every single person on their team has a match up. There are obviously a few stand outs within their team, with a lot of these players being in their forward line, which in turn we have a few options in place for these players. To name a few of these match ups without saying to much;  
  
Jacob Burnett to play on Matteo Paolini: Matteo is one of their key forwards who really proved himself, kicking 12 in a game. This is something we’ve looked at and given Jacob the job to shut him down, which he has done in the past.   
  
Kade Francis and Tom Currie head to head in the Ruck: Tom is a quality ruckman that has a large amount of size to him. Currie does like to be a go to ground ruckman and is a strong competitor. Kade and Tom have met a few times this year and are both very evenly matched which will make for a strong contest throughout the entire day.   
  
This Saturday will be an epic game and I encourage you all to come out early and support the Storm boys as they embark on this epic finals experience. For more details, check out the ‘Port Cygnet Football Club’ on Facebook, or follow us on Instagram ‘@cygnetfootballclub’.