

Falcons Wrap up Minor Premiership, Now Aim For Major Title

THE Geelong Falcons have claimed the TAC Cup minor premiership for the first time since 2009 following a dominating performance against Dandenong in the final round of the season.

The Falcons will now face the Calder Cannons – who beat them a fortnight ago with a goal after the siren – in the First Qualifying Final at Carlton’s Visy Park this Saturday afternoon for a spot in a Preliminary Final.

It’s the 11th straight season that the Falcons have been part of Finals action and they’ll be keen to go at least one step better than their Semi-Final result from 2012.

The Falcons took advantage of the Stingrays’ inaccurate kicking to record a 13.5 (83) to 5.12 (42) at Victoria Park. Dandenong failed to score a goal in the first half, kicking 10 behinds to allow the Falcons to lead by 28 points at the main break.

Falcons coach Andy Allthorpe said the reason for the Stingrays inaccuracy was the pressure implied by their defenders. “The (forward 50) entries for the game were pretty even (41-39 in Dandenong’s favor) so it wasn’t if they weren’t taking the ball in,” Allthorpe said.

“We just took our opportunities in front of goal. Our backs are certainly defending pretty well. We’ve kept two good teams to under 10 goals in our last two games.”

“We focused this week on the contested ball and tackles and (forward 50 entries). We worked hard on what we wanted to do. There’s still a few areas we need to tidy up but we’re confident going into the finals.”

The Falcons’ goals came from a mix of tall and small forwards, with Scott Dixon booting three along with Marcus Thompson. Doug Bond, Aaron Christensen and Hugh Goddard each chipped in with two.

Jye Cross was excellent in defence supported by Sam Russell while Nic Bourke, James Tsitas and Joe Maishman won plenty of the ball in the midfield. Allthorpe had high praise for ruckman Luke Davis, who has played the position all season despite being only 195cm.

“It was probably his best game,” Allthorpe said of the Barwon Heads’ big man. “He got back and supported the back half and was involved in our transition, which was great. He just gets out there and works hard, does his bit for the team. He’s a bit unheralded.”

The Falcons are likely to regain key forward Patrick McCartin for the Qualifying Final but doubts hang over the fitness of gun rover and potential top 10 draft pick Lewis Taylor.

Allthorpe said everyone involved with the club is excited to be part of the finals. “We feel really organised,” Allthorpe said. “Everyone knows their role and what’s expected of them and we’re ready to get out there and give it our best shot.”

The Falcons-Cannons match will be played at 2pm this Saturday at Visy Park, Carlton.

Brad Green

SCOREBOARD

| | QT | HT | 3QT | Final Score |
|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|--------------------|
| Dandenong Stingrays | 0.4 (4) | 0.10 (10) | 3.11 (29) | 5.12 (42) |
| Geelong Falcons | 4.0 (24) | 6.2 (38) | 9.2 (56) | 13.5 (83) |

Dandenong Stingrays

Goal Kickers: D. Gawley, W. Hartung, T. Lamb, A. Scott, J. Pickess.

Best Players: N. Foote, T. Lamb, J. Bastinac, D. Kempster, J. Soroczynski, W. Hartung.

Geelong Falcons

Goal Kickers: M. Thompson 3, S. Dixon 3, D. Bond 2, H. Goddard 2, A. Christensen 2, R. Adams.

Best Players: L. Davis, J. Cross, S. Russell, J. Tsitas, N. Bourke, J. Maishman.