

Falcons Fire...! Proceed to Prelim Final...

THE Geelong Falcons are through to their first TAC Cup Preliminary Final in five seasons after a comfortable win in the opening weekend of the finals. The Falcons overpowered the Calder Cannons to win 13.11 (89) to 7.7 (49) at Carlton's Visy Park to earn a week's break.

It will be the Falcons first Preliminary Final appearance since they lost to the Dandenong Stingrays in 2009 – and just their second since 2001. They will play the winner of this weekend's Semi-Final between the Eastern Ranges and Northern Knights.

Falcons' coach Andy Allthorpe said either side would be a difficult opponent for the Falcons in a fortnight. "It doesn't matter who we play, both of those teams have beaten us so we'll be really focused this week on preparing for both," he said.

"We'll have a look at the match on the weekend and then really narrow our focus on which side wins."

After an even opening term, the Falcons took control of the match in the second quarter to open up a 19-point lead at the main break. They had virtually sealed the result by three quarter time after kicking five goals to the Knights' two for the term.

In a pleasing sign, nine of the Falcons goals came from their three key forwards in Patrick McCartin, Hugh Goddard and Scott Dixon, whose haul now has him the side's equal leading goalscorer this season.

Allthorpe said the trio combined well but stressed they would need to replicate that effort in a fortnight's time. "It was a much improved performance in their understanding of where each other was. They looked like they were settled a bit more together," he said.

"It was the first time that they had played together in the same team for a while. For all three to be that busy was a good sign. They're starting to understand their roles. We get them to work to their strengths (on the ground)."

Midfielders Joe Maishman, James Tsitas, Reid Adams and George Cameron ensured the forwards had plenty of opportunities while Fraser Fort and Sam Russell worked hard in defence to limit the Cannons' forwards.

Allthorpe said the Falcons won three key areas on the stats sheet – tackles, contested possessions and inside forward 50 entries. "We didn't start the game well," he said. "They were all over us early in contested footy but once we started to win it (ball) on the inside we started to hurt them on the outside."

“It was an improvement on our game the previous week but there are still areas we know we can improve on. “We had 11 more (forward 50) entries and if you do that in a final you’re going to put your opposition under pressure.”

Allthorpe said the Falcons would have a training session at their Highton headquarters on Saturday morning.

Brad Green

SCOREBOARD

	QT	HT	3QT	Final Score
Geelong Falcons	3.1 (19)	7.6 (48)	12.8 (80)	13.11 (89)
Calder Cannons	3.3 (21)	4.5 (29)	6.5 (41)	7.7 (49)

Geelong Falcons

Goal Kickers: P. McCartin 3, H. Goddard 3, S. Dixon 3, D. Bond 2, M. Thompson, J. Maishman.

Best Players: J. Maishman, S. Russell, J. Tsitas, R. Adams, G. Cameron, F. Fort.

Calder Cannons

Goal Kickers: P. Wright 2, J. Cooke 2, A. Christensen, J. Clothier, P. Ahern.

Best Players: E. McConnell, R. O'Brien, T. Donoghue, J. Clothier, M. Jensen, J. Lever.