

SPORT

Magpies pay cost with trio hurt in FFA Cup win

SOCCER

BY MICHAEL HARTSHORN

THE Maitland Magpies beat Swansea 4-0 on Wednesday night to progress to the fifth round of the FFA Cup.

The Magpies will learn their next opponent next week when most of the round four fixtures are played.

Maitland, however, paid a price for the win and finished with 10 fit men, with Tommy Davies, James Thompson and Grant Brown all suffering injuries.

All three will be tested at a light training run on Friday, with Davies and Thompson rated a chance of playing.

Brown, however, left the field in the second half with a groin injury and will face an uphill battle to be fit for Sunday's wet-weather catch-up game against joint competition leader Lambton Jaffas at Cooks Square Park.

Maitland could grab a share of the competition lead, with a game in hand over their rivals, if they beat Lambton on Sunday.

But it is early season and the Magpies will be taking no risks with players with hopes of making the FFA Cup round of 32 for the first time as well as pushing for finals action in the Northern NSW NPL.

"It was a tight contest, they were very well organised. They sat in well and clogged up the midfield and made it hard for us," Magpies coach Mick Bolch said of his side's FFA Cup win.

Alex Reid scored the only goal of the first half, chipping the keeper from about 35 metres out.

"It was a terrific goal and we hit the post about three times in the first half. We were our own worst ene-



FITNESS TEST: James Thompson injured his foot in Wednesday night's FFA Cup win against Swansea. Picture: Michael Hartshorn

mies," Bolch said.

"However, we scored about three goals in the first 15 to 20 minutes of the second half.

"One to Tommy Duggan and two absolute bomb free kicks, one from Pratty (Sean Pratt) and the other from Jimmy Thompson. Both were about from about 25 to 30 metres and both finished in the top corner."

Ryan Broadley hit the post twice and narrowly missed

the back of the net with another screamer from a free kick.

"It's a running joke that Ralphy is never going to score. One hit the post and rolled across the goal line and went out for a goal kick and the other hit the cross bar," Bolch said.

"He was very good again for us in the middle of the park.

"Swansea were good value, it was a real Cup tie

match. We ended up with lots of bumps and bruises, it was a physical contest.

"Grant Brown did his groin, we don't know the extent of it at the moment, he came off injured, Tommy Davies come off injured, Jimmy Thompson come off injured so there are a few walking wounded going into the weekend."

Bolch said he expected a tough contest on Sunday with the Jaffas full of danger-

ous players

"They were leading the competition alone until last week and will be stinging from being beaten 3-1 by the Jets Youth," he said.

"(Braedyn) Crowley is probably the form striker of the comp at the moment and they've got plenty of dangers in Luke Remington, (Michael) Kantarovski and (Finn) Parris has been doing really good in the middle for them."

Danger games loom for Maitland

BASKETBALL

THE Maitland Mustangs have been put on notice not to drop off in intensity as they prepare for a double-header against middle-of-the ladder opponents.

Mustangs coach Luke Boyle said the Canberra Gunners and Penrith Panthers were welcoming back players to their line-ups and were much stiffer opposition than their rankings of 10th and eighth would suggest.

"The last thing we can afford to do is drop off in any of our intensity as Canberra and Penrith will be far tougher opponents than they have been to date," Boyle said.

"They're getting back players and as older squads they are also building into the season and will be far stronger in the second half.

"We are going very well, but our results have been based on hard work across the team and the moment you drop that off only a bit you are in trouble."

The Mustangs are coming off claiming their biggest scalp of the year, handing the Central Coast Crusaders their first loss in an 85-82 overtime thriller on the Central Coast.

Courtesy of the win, Maitland and Manly remain equal on points with a 6-2 record from their eight games. The Crusader have seven wins from their eight games.

The Maitland men and women's champion league teams and the youth men are in action at the Maitland Federation Centre on Saturday and Sunday.

The youth women have the weekend off, but return with all four teams at home on May 11.

—MICHAEL HARTSHORN

Formosa's Newcastle Derby runner on a roll

HARNESS RACING

THE luck of the draw is against him, but Ellalong trainer-driver Michael Formosa remains hopeful Rolling With Stell can deliver where two former stars haven't in the Newcastle Derby on Friday night.

Rolling With Stell has won his past three starts, including the last two at Newcastle from gate one, but he will start from the extreme outside in the \$10,600 Derby (2550 metres).

"He's had a bit of luck with his draws his last couple of starts, so his luck's run out,"

Formosa said with a laugh.

"He's going really good, but it depends how the race is run, I guess, where he finishes. But if any horses get tired in that race, he will run over the top of them.

"His last two wins he's been behind the leader and sprinted home, so chasing them is definitely not a worry. Jack Callaghan drove him last week and said he was going easy in the run.

"There's probably not going to be any speed, so we're going to have to play it by ear at the start, weigh up what we think is going to happen,



CHANCE: Ellalong trainer-driver Michael Formosa will drive Rolling With Stell in the Newcastle Derby.

and either come out hard or drive for a bit of luck."

Rolling With Stell has

recorded 1:56:5 and 1:54:2 miles at Newcastle at his most recent starts but will

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It depends how the race is run, I guess, where he finishes. But if any horses get tired in that race, he will run over the top of them.

MICHAEL FORMOSA

start just outside top picks

Roll With Lachlan and Leonidas in the nine-horse field.

Formosa will be hoping for better luck in the feature.

In 2012, he drove Smolda, which went on to win multiple group 1s, including the Inter Dominion, to runner-up behind Scandalman. The next year, he steered his own star, recently retired two-time group 1 winner Ultimate Art, to second behind Ambro Chimes.

"I came second with Smolda and Ultimate Art - the two best horses I've ever driven couldn't win it," he said.

—CRAIG KERRY