

## SPORT

# Goannas hold on to beat Bulldogs in thriller

NEWCASTLE RL

BY MICHAEL HARTSHORN

CESSNOCK survived a pressure-cooker final five minutes to score a 26-22 win against Kurri Kurri at The Graveyard on Saturday.

Goannas wing Joey Woodbury scored his second hat-trick of the season including a length-of-the-field try for his second in the first half to give Cessnock a 10-8 lead.

Kurri Kurri dominated the first 20 minutes but were only able to score a try by Tyme Dow-Nickau and conversion and penalty goals by Jarom Haines.

Bulldogs back-rower Reid Alchin crossed in the 36th minute and Haines slotted home the conversion to give Kurri a 14-10 at the break.

Both sides were guilty of errors in a high-pressure opening to the second half and the Goannas finally opened the scoring in the 50th minute with back-rower Reed Hugon running onto an excellent cut-out pass and into a hole for a converted try to take a 16-14 lead.

Nick Lawrence extended the lead with a clever dummy-half run in the 57th minute and when Scott Briggs converted again Cessnock led 22-14.

Bulldogs wing Barry McGrady got one back on his opposite Woodbury grabbing an intercept near the Bulldogs line and racing to the other end to score a try. The conversion was waved away and the Goannas lead was cut to 22-18.

Woodbury's scored his third in the 68th minute at the end of a Goannas set from a knock-on from the kick-off following McGrady's try for a 26-18 game



**HAT-TRICK:** Cessnock's Joe Woodbury celebrates after scoring the first of his three tries. **Picture:** Michael Hartshorn

It proved the match-winner but there were still plenty of twists with Sam Wooton crossing the line after finishing on the end of a ricocheting ball from a Ngangarra Barker kick.

Haines missed the conversion and with four minutes to play the score was 26-22.

Never far from the action, Goannas utility Paul Carter was sin-binned with 90 seconds left on the clock for disputing a referee's call.

The Goannas defenders held on and the club scored their third win in a row and fourth of the season to go equal on points with Kurri, South Newcastle and Maitland.

Goannas coach Todd Edwards said he was extremely proud of his team but they needed to learn how to shut the game down after allowing the Bulldogs back into the game twice in the second half after seemingly having

the game in their control.

"That's derbies, neither side gives too much away," he said.

"Kurri came out of the blocks and were all over us in the first 20. We clawed our way back and then they got one and went into half-time leading 14-10.

"I thought we were really dominant in the second half. The only thing we didn't dominate was the scoreboard. We kept getting away

from them and we'd let them back in.

"They got an intercept and so did we, but it just turned the momentum of the game. It turned the game.

"I was so proud of them. Losing Carts in the last bit, but we still held up our line with 12."

Bulldogs coach Ron Griffiths said the Bulldogs had the better of the first half, but Cessnock were more committed in the second.

## Rosellas humble Pickers 44-10

NEWCASTLE RL

WESTERN Suburbs were back to their best in a seven-try humbling of the Maitland Pickers at Harker Oval on Sunday.

The under-manned Pickers went into the match on the back of two spirited wins but were blown away for the second time this season by the premiership favourites.

Smarting from their upset loss to Cessnock last week, Wests put the game out of the Pickers reach in a six-try 20 minute period from the 15 minute mark of the first half.

Sam Keenan opened the scoring and was followed at the 18th minute by Luke Walsh, Blake Andrews (24th minute), Chad O'Donnell (29th minute), Ryan Walker (31st minute) and Pat Mata'utia in the 34th minute.

Keenan converted all six to give Wests a 36-0 lead at half-time.

Jarrold Smith got Maitland on the board two minutes after the break with a try converted by Jye Bieman King.

Wests got back out to a 36-point lead in the 52nd minute when Fuaimamao Uta crossed and Keenan kicked his seventh conversion for a personal tally of 18.

Pickers teenage forward Cooper Jenkins showed spirit to cross for an unconverted try in the 75th minute.

Former Pickers fullback Ryan Walsh finished Wests scoring spree with a 79th minute penalty goal.

South Newcastle smashed Lakes United 42-0 to get two points clear in second spot one game behind Wests.

Maitland drops to fifth equal on points with Kurri Kurri and Cessnock in third and fourth respectively.

—MICHAEL HARTSHORN

# Magpies and Bears score important wins

SOCCER

MATT Swan scored a double for Maitland and Liam Wilson got one for Weston as the two Coalfields sides recorded expected but important wins in Northern NSW NPL action on Sunday.

The Magpies sealed their 4-2 away win against Valentine with a special goal in overtime featuring young guns Louis Townsend and Tommy Duggan.

After skipper Carl Thornton forced a turnover, Joel Wood fed the ball back to Townsend who passed the ball across the top of the pen-

alty area to Duggan.

Duggan stepped back into play drawing two opponents and opening the way with a pass off the side of his foot for Townsend to score off a darting run.

The Maitland travelling fans could finally relax after Valentine brought the game back to life with a goal in the 83rd minute by Aaron Niyonkuru reduced Maitland's 3-1 half-time lead to just a goal.

The home crowd sniffed an upset and were in full voice as the Phoenix players bombarded the Maitland defence in the final minutes



**SEALER:** Magpies players rush into celebrate Louis Townsend's 92nd minute goal. **Picture:** BarTV still

before Townsend sealed the game.

Matt Swan opened the scoring in the sixth minute of the match when he managed to reach at full stretch

a Ryan Clarke squaring pass and squeezed a shot past the Valentine keeper.

Both teams traded chances without any addition to the score until the 42nd minute mark when Valentine equalised when Jacob Bailey was allowed to turn on a miss-kick inside the box and volley past Matt Trott.

Just a minute later, Swan got his double when he tapped in front on the end of a Joel Wood cross which beat the keeper and a defender.

In the fifth minute of over-time Wood got his just rewards when he beat one

defender on the right wing and then chipped a defender and the keeper from the edge of the box.

Two superb Liam Wilson strikes were enough to ensure the Weston Bears stayed on top of the table with a 2-1 win against Adamstown.

Wilson beat the Rosebud keeper in the 25th minute with a cracking shot directly in from just outside the penalty area.

He then repeated the feat in the 52nd minute at the other end in almost identical circumstances.

—MICHAEL HARTSHORN