

# Lauren: faithful servant of club and community

GRETA Branxton FC volunteer and administrator, Lauren Fairfull, has officially been announced as the Northern NSW Football (NNSWF) Female Administrator of the Year.

Originally a netballer, Lauren first became involved in the game of football as a fan-turned-player at the age of 19.

In recent years she has taken on numerous and various roles as a volunteer and administrator including the uniform sales coordinator, club registrar, secretary, and even coach and organiser of all the ALDI MiniRoos competitions, gala days, club fundraisers and events.

If that's not enough, she has somehow found time to continue playing.

Lauren has been instrumental in both gaining Greta Branxton FC accreditation in the National Club Accreditation Scheme and also the Hunter Valley Club of the Year award in 2016.

But she feels fortunate that the club has gifted her with incredible experiences and improved her skills through being an administrator.

"We had recently moved to Branxton and my netball playing daughter went to a school football gala day and came home wanting to play weekend, so I sent my husband down to register her, knowing he would be a proud soccer dad," Lauren said of her start with the club.

"Somehow, he came home



**AWARD:** Lauren Fairfull was named Northern NSW Football (NNSWF) Female Administrator of the Year for her work with Greta Branxton.

as a registered player as well, turning Saturdays into a family football event.

"Nine seasons later, we are more very heavily involved as each year goes by. We feel a sense of belonging to this club and want the club to achieve its best potential.

"I have gained many skills that can even be used in work situations, become a

stronger person and leader and gained many friendships - all from football.

"Having a club to belong to is very important, and this feeling of belonging to a community sporting group has helped shape who I am."

Hunter Valley Football operations manager, Sarah White, highlighted Lauren's devotion, dedication and

application as a driving force behind Greta Branxton.

"Lauren is a fantastic club person, secretary and administrator and their club is run proficiently and efficiently with Lauren being a key driver," Ms White said.

"Her experience and level-headed approach to running a community football club has earned her a nota-

ble and reliable reputation with Hunter Valley Football and fellow club administrators throughout the zone. We congratulate her for being the very deserving recipient of this award."

Lauren also encourages others to be a part of their local club to help build the game, particularly females.

"Get involved. It's worth it."

## BEARS TO HIT BACK AFTER LOSS

HAVING dropped from their top spot over their week off, Weston are at home on Saturday against a Valentine side who stole a point from under their noses last time out and will be looking to bounce back from two straight losses.

Due to ground unavailability at Croudace Bay, the game will now be held at Bear Park.

When the two met earlier in the league there, a late Jackson Burston goal was cancelled out by an even later Ben Hay strike, while Valentine were also able to muster a tremendous comeback victory when they met in the FFA Cup.

It'll be those kinds of result that the Bears will be wary of as they venture into the business end of a finals battle.

In their last outing, Weston went down to rivals Maitland in the 'El Clasi-coal', ending a five-game winning streak.

But the Phoenix have struggled to find form and capitalise on their strong FFA Cup run, having only managed a disappointing four points from their past 11 games.

If Valentine want to avoid a tussle for the wooden spoon, they'll need to begin taking points off the teams above them - so far, they've only managed two points when facing higher-placed sides - but although Weston are sitting in the top four, they have the fourth-worst defensive record in the competition.

Valentine Phoenix coach Sam Griffin confessed the field change isn't phasing he or his team.

"Some grounds you go to and you think 'I really don't want to play here again', but we don't have that feeling at Weston," said Griffin.

"As much as you hate to give up a home game, it's a good pitch to play on, it suits us and we've had success there.

"We just seem to go quite well when we're at Weston. I wish I knew what it was because if I did I'd bottle it and use it for every week."

After going down to the Jets over the weekend, Griffin said his side need to make sure they stay switched on..

"For 95 per cent of the game we're good, but our games are getting defined by a 5 to 10 minute period," he said.

"We're playing well enough to win games, it's just putting it together for a complete game."



**GOALS:** Joel Wood has been the Magpies main avenue to goal. **Picture:** Michael Hartshorn

## Magpies in crunch game for title hopes

**SOCCER**

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"He will certainly play a role in those three games.

"Ralphy Broadley is back in training, so realistically the only ones we are missing at the moment are Grant Brown and Sean Pratt.

"It's starting to come back together. Cowby comes in this week and Matt Thompson as well, so that's another two A-League players.

"We all know that we've had a pretty threadbare squad for the past month and the young boys have stepped up.

"We've won every game so it will be a tough call this weekend whether everyone comes into the starting side or if we stick with the side

that has been doing the job.

"The boys who have been playing have been performing well.

"I'm more than confident in them doing the job."

The Magpies have also found goal scoring form, with seven goals in the past two games led by striker Joel Wood but with important input from youngsters Lewis Townsend and Tommy Duggan.

"The combinations have been getting better each week so hopefully we go on with that," Bolch said.

"If we get the win this weekend then we are right in the minor premiership hunt.

"If not its us back among six or seven teams chasing play-offs."

— MICHAEL HARTSHORN