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PAGE 13



# Magpies push Jaffas in impressive draw



**GOALSCORERS:** Lambton Jaffas' Bren Hammel and Maitland's Ryan Clarke battle for possession on Sunday at Cooks Square Park. **Picture:** Jonathan Carroll

**NORTHERN NSW NPL**  
**BY CRAIG KERRY**

LAMBTON Jaffas may have missed the chance to move clear on top of the table after a late equaliser from Maitland, but coach James Pascoe was just pleased to get something against a team he sees as genuine contenders this year.

The Magpies came back twice to level at Cooks Square Park on Sunday to draw their Northern NSW NPL catch-up game 2-2.

Sean Pratt, who came off the bench to equalise in the 2-1 win over Edgeworth three weeks ago, delivered again for Maitland. Off a long ball, Ryan Clarke provided the run in behind and the chipped cross to find Pratt for the equaliser in the 84th minute.

Braedyn Crowley had opened the scoring for Jaffas in the 40th minute with his second attempt after goalkeeper Matt Trott blocked his first shot.

Clarke put Maitland level from close range in first-half injury time after Matt Thompson's back-post header was stopped by goalkeeper Brad Swancott.

Bren Hammel then gave Jaffas back the lead in the 61st minute with a brilliant run and strike from 20 metres.

The result lifted Jaffas to 14

points, ahead of Broadmeadow on goals difference and a point clear of Edgeworth after seven matches each.

Maitland FC football director Simon Rutherford said the Magpies had show real fight to come back twice from behind.

"Probably in the last 10 minutes we came close to getting a winner," Rutherford said.

"Our defence was strong again, with Alex Read coming in for Zach Thomas this week.

"James Thompson was very good and worked incredibly hard. Matt Thompson had a very good game and Sean Pratt was great again coming off the bench for us.

"He started the play which resulted in him scoring the equaliser."

Pascoe was disappointed his side could not close out the game at 2-1 but he was "pretty happy regardless" in the result given the standard of the opposition and absence of Michael Kantarovski (calf), Pat Brown (work), Brock Messenger and Nathan Verity (both hamstringing).

"In my eyes, they are one of the contenders to win the whole thing," Pascoe said of the Magpies, who are fifth on 11 points from only six games. "They have a super balance about them."

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