Gippsland Power Media Release

By Bryan Mitchell

Loy Yang B Gippsland Power’s 2011 TAC Cup campaign took a sudden downturn when they suffered a humiliating thrashing at the hands of the Sandringham Dragons last weekend. In a game of two distinct halves the Power were right in the game at the long break but literally went missing in the second half in one of the club’s most disappointing efforts in its proud nineteen year history in this elite competition.

A strong, gusting breeze was favouring the eastern end of the ground and both sides struggled early to get their game going. It was the Power who broke the deadlock but it was only a point and both sides were finding it difficult to create scoring opportunities. By the first change the Power led three points to two but had wasted a lot of their hard won opportunities by over-using the ball by hand when a long kick was the better option. They were at their bustling bets but turned the ball over too easily.

Early in the second term the Power began to be more purposeful and Simon Deery and Danny Butcher combined to allow Tim Membrey to kick the first goal of the game. Some more direct play by Matt Northe, Shaun Wyatt and Will Hams saw Membrey kick the second for the Power but from then on the pattern of the game began to change and the Power started to lose their grip on the game.

Overelaborate play by the Power allowed the Dragons to score two quick goals and this was repeated son after when another unnecessary turnover gifted the Dragons their third goal and a six point lead at the long break. After looking to be competitive for much of the first half, the Power allowed the Dragons to seize the initiative going into the third quarter. Not even the Dragons keenest fan could have predicted what was to unfold in the second half as they kicked seventeen goals to three to blow the Power out of the game and inflict an embarrassing “flogging” on the insipid Power side.

A combination of poor decision making and skill execution saw the Power offer scant defence against the now rampaging Dragons as the Power moved away from the trademarks that have been so important in their recent seasons in the TAC Cup. The Dragons were playing well but they must have been surprised at how easily they won the ball and how ineffective the Power were when attempting to stop them setting up their seven goals for the quarter.

Going into the last quarter the Power were over fifty points down but there was much worse to come. On the positive side for the Power, Jordan Staley marked strongly and converted for two goals and Simon Deery chipped in for another but for the rest of the term the Dragons ran riot and kicked ten goals, often with ridiculous ease. In the process they belittled the Power who were made to look as if they weren’t interested in the contest. This was most unlike the Power as the club prides itself on its hardness in the contest and the Dragons were able to brush them aside with ridiculous ease.

Final scores Sandringham Dragons 20 goals 12 behinds 132 points defeated the Loy Yang B Gippsland Power 5 goals 9 behinds 39 points. Goal kickers Tim Membrey and Jordan Staley 2 each, Simon Deery 1. On a day when the backline was being besieged because of the constant turnovers up field defender Sam Docherty stuck to his task manfully and tried hard to initially stem his influence and then attempt to use the ball with purpose. Fellow backman Simon Deery also offered stout resistance as well as taking important marks despite the increasing frequency that the ball was coming into the area. He backed his judgement well to turn defence into attack.

Youngster Tim Membrey didn’t get many easy opportunities but worked hard to present a target for team mates in key forward posts. His ability to make a consistent effort when the ball was at ground level added to the importance of his contribution. On the ball and up forward Jordan Staley was tireless as he worked hard in the rucking contests as well as marking well when moved up forward. His ability to get involved at ground level was an added bonus in a solid game against the odds.

Young backman Ryley Hall showed great poise despite being under the pump for much of the game. He was disciplined and made good decisions as well as backing himself to run and carry the ball when he felt that he could do something positive for the side. Utility Luke Thompson was another to stick to his task well and he too made effective use of his opportunities. He took several important marks as well as working hard to use the ball with purpose and precision.

It was the ultimate reality check for the Power in terms of where they are at in the 2011 season and just how much harder and smarter they need to work if they are to realise their potential. They didn’t learn the lesson from the first game when they wasted the ball badly and were far worse against the Dragons. It was a performance that was unacceptable in terms of the intensity required and the ability to use the ball properly.

Adam Dowie will have a tough job to address the glaring deficiencies that the Dragons so ruthlessly exposed and exploited. This week’s opponents, the Bendigo Pioneers, will go to school on the film of this feeble capitulation and will be keen to add to the Powers woes. It will be a stern test of the boys resolve and willingness to expand their comfort zones and Adam will be looking for his leaders to step up and set the tone for the side.