



Lady Warriors erase doubts

By **SCOTT ANDERSON**

IT'S not often a side wins a game of basketball by 93 points only to have its credentials questioned.

But that was the case for Wangaratta's Lady Warriors after last Saturday's stunning 113-20 demolition of Deniliquin.

But there will be no more queries about the team after its latest performance – a brilliant 34-point dismissal of a classy Maryborough outfit on Saturday night – and coach Jason Bannerman knows it.

"This should put a lot of things to rest," Bannerman said after his charges put in a dominant second half against the Blazers.

"We got asked during the week about how bad the opposition was.

"Not once were we asked if our girls were really that good.

"I think tonight they've sent out a message to a few people that they are here, and they're here to be competitive."

The Lady Warriors had a slow start, trailing 8-1 midway through the opening period at Wangaratta Indoor Sports and Aquatic Centre.

A long jump shot from Alana Sutton and a three-pointer to debutant Chaye Crimmins turned the tide, but the home side was still down by a point at the end of the first quarter.

Sutton was superb in the second, pulling in big rebounds, hitting shots, creating turnovers and sparking the team with a huge block that had the fans on their feet.

Wangaratta took the lead in the second, but it was in the third that they took control of the contest.

After leading 32-29 at the main break, the Lady Warriors launched a 17-4 run to start the third, eventually taking a 13-point buffer into the last change.

"We started off really flat tonight," Bannerman said.

"We forced issues, couldn't get up the floor – it might have been a bit of a hangover from last week.

"But to their credit they pegged it back in the second.

"In footy they talk about the third quarter being the premiership quarter – that was our quarter tonight, and it was awesome to see."

The final period was domi-

nated by the Wangaratta side, with Paige Zamperoni and Larissa Laverty scoring 10 points each in the quarter as the Lady Warriors outscored the Blazers 34-10 to run away with a 90-53 victory.

Crimmins was excellent in her first game for the team, scoring eight points and picking up plenty of steals.

"Chaye and Holly (Judd) are my two captains in under 18s, so it was good to get them out there," Bannerman said.

"Chaye is a shooter, and her intensity up and down the floor was great.

"She reads the ball so well, and it's great to see her bring that up to another level."

After a quiet first half Laverty finished with a match high 21 points, while fellow tall Olivia Lindsay had 13 points, and both had a stack of rebounds, particularly in offence.

"Olivia is the real dark horse in the side," Bannerman said.

"Her want for the ball and her grip once she gets hold of it – they don't get it back off her.

"(Laverty) was great, and every game she's just going to get better and better."



SHARP SHOOTER: Chaye Crimmins launches a long jump shot against the Blazers.



ON THE BURST: Zack Leitch drives past Maryborough's Matt Johnston.

PHOTOS: Marc Bongers



TO THE HOOP: Julian Campagna attempts to get a shot past Matt Johnston.