

Hickey Leads the Way as Falcons Remain Unbeaten

HAVING been dumped from the Vic Country squad for this year's AFL under-18 national championships, co-captain Alex Hickey responded in the best possible fashion to continue the Geelong Falcons unbeaten start to the TAC Cup season.

The Falcons had 11 players named in the Vic Country squad with Hickey among those cut at the final training session. But he put that axing behind him to star in the Falcons 14.11 (95) to 10.8 (68) win over the Calder Cannons at Craigieburn as Geelong posted its sixth win of the season.

Usually a reliable player across half-back, Hickey was given a chance to play in the midfield by Falcons coach Andy Allthorpe and he led by example in the five-goal victory. "I felt Alex was our best player," Allthorpe told *The Geelong Advertiser*.

"He gave us plenty of drive and then we rolled him off half back in the second half to steady us up and use his rebound ability. He was cut from Vic Country, which would've been tough for him, but he responded really well, really positively on the weekend."

The Falcons led at every break, with the Cannons best period of the game coming in the second term when they closed the gap to seven points at the main break. Allthorpe said while the Falcons kept the Cannons at arm's length for most the game, they could never break the game open.

"We couldn't shake them. They were super competitive at the stoppages and contested ball, as most metro sides are," he told *The Geelong Advertiser*. "So it was certainly a great challenge for us. It was a good win. We fought it out really well."

Hickey, fellow co-captain James Tsitas, Billy Beardsell, Matt Boag and Darcy Gardiner each booted two goals to highlight how much the Falcons spread the load on a weekly basis. After starring up forward in the first six games, the Falcons swung Fraser Fort back into defence for the first time this season and he responded by dominating at full back.

Jye Cross was also rock solid at centre half-back, George Cameron and Lewis Taylor gave great support to Hickey in the midfield while Kody Spokes - who made his senior debut with Colac the previous weekend - continued his great form switching between half-forward and an on-ball role.

The Falcons are back at Craigieburn's Highgate Reserve this Saturday to take on the Bendigo Pioneers.

Six players - Patrick McCartin, Hugh Goddard, Jackson Nelson, Darcy Lang, Fraser Fort and Jye Cross - will head to Darwin on Saturday to play for Vic Country in the opening match of the under-18 national championships against the Northern Territory.

Brad Green

SCOREBOARD

	1QT			HT			3QT			Final Score		
Calder Cannons	2	3	-15	5	4	-34	7	5	-47	10	8	-68
Geelong Falcons	4	3	-27	6	5	-41	10	7	-67	14	11	-95

Calder Cannons

Goal Kickers: J. Bonello 2, A. Prestia, P. Ahern, C. Van Der Byl, M. Merlo, J. Cooke, M. Goodyear, R. Schraven, B. Morrison.

Best Players: P. Ahern, M. Merlo, J. Owen, N. Blair, J. Clothier, M. Goodyear.

Geelong Falcons

Goal Kickers: J. Tsitas 2, D. Gardiner 2, M. Boag 2, B. Beardsell 2, A. Hickey 2, L. Taylor, D. Lang, M. Thompson, W. Flanders.

Best Players: A. Hickey, J. Cross, L. Taylor, F. Fort, G. Cameron, K. Spokes.