**TAC CUP ROUND 15 MATCH REPORT – Gippsland Power v Calder Cannons**

Gippsland Power has continued its winning ways with a 23 point victory over Calder Cannons.

Taking plenty of confidence from last weekend’s triumph against ladder leaders Geelong Falcons, Power defeated its second “football factory” in succession, knocking off the Cannons on their home deck, Gippsland Power 14.16.100 to Calder Cannons 11.11.77.

For the second weekend in a row Power faced trying weather conditions. A bitterly cold wind howled down the ground, providing a strong advantage to one end. The wind was so strong that players kicking the ball high into the wind found it coming right back to them like a boomerang.

Kicking with the wind in the first quarter Power quickly established a lead. Will Stephenson was involved in everything early, if he wasn’t kicking goals himself he was setting up his team mates. For all of their hard work though Power led by just 15 points at the first break.

Lapses in concentration and turnovers proved costly in the second term, with Calder using the wind advantage and piling on five goals. When Stephenson kicked his second goal against the run of play it sparked the team into action and although it wasn’t reflected on the scoreboard, Power finished off the half strongly.

Jai Rout was rewarded for his forward pressure, winning a free kick 40 metres out from goal right on the half time siren. A controversial ‘touched’ decision denied him what seemed to be a goal.

Trailing by 13 points, Power went into the half time break full of confidence. Coach Leigh Brown implored his young players to kick long down the middle of the ground to maximise the wind advantage and for the midfielders to increase their defensive efforts and be more accountable.

Brown was certainly pleased with his team in the third term, as they did just what he asked. They dominated centre clearances and utilised the ball well with an eight goal to one quarter that set up the victory.

Nathan Voss was lively up forward booting three goals in ten minutes and Josh Patullo let one go from the centre square that sailed over the goal umpires head. Patullo dominated, both in the air and around the ground, following up his ruck work with clearances and pressure efforts.

Playing as the 23rd man, under 16’s player Xavier Duursma kicked his first ever TAC Cup goal, and when Ben Ainsworth showed his elite skills with an interception and goal, it gave Power a 38 point lead going into the final term.

In any other circumstance, such a lead would be a comfortable position, but since the Cannons were kicking with the wind in the last quarter, the pressure was really on Power’s defenders to nullify the advantage and hang on to the lead.

Power controlled the ball early in the last quarter and when Trent Armour kicked a good goal from a set shot it seemingly broke the spirits of the Cannons. They managed to kick four goals using the wind, but the defensive efforts from Brad Dessent, Campbell McKenzie, Sean Masterson, Kade Reenoy and Keenan Hughes constantly repelled the Cannons attack.

A happy Coach Brown commended the great team effort after the match.

“Our effort was really good all game, but the difference was how we used the ball in the second half” Brown said.

“We were much smarter. We really have come a long way from when we played Calder earlier in the season. The confidence of the group is really growing.”

In that Round 5 match, the Cannons defeated Power by 52 points. Power’s improvement clearly demonstrated through a 75 point turnaround.

The TAC Cup competition now takes a break for a development weekend, but there will be plenty of Power player’s in action elsewhere. A number of bottom age players have been selected by the Victoria Country Academy to play in a ‘Futures’ match with an eye to next years under 18 National Championship.

Ben Ainsworth will also be running out for VFL affiliate Casey Scorpions as the 23rd man when they take on Essendon which could see Ainsworth matching up against former Power player Nash Holmes in the midfield.

*Gippsland Power’s next game is against Eastern Ranges on Saturday 13th August at Morwell Recreation Reserve.*

**Calder Cannons**   1.1  6.6  7.6  11.11 (77)
**Gippsland Power** 3.4  4.5  12.14  14.16 (100)

**GOALS:** Voss 4 Stephenson 2 Ainsworth 2 Hodge  Patullo  Marsh  Duursma  Quigley  Armour

**BEST:** Patullo Ainsworth Hogan Voss Leslie Duursma