**Sunny Side Up**

Match Report – Noosa Lions v Woombye 21 June - Alasdair Scott

A tenacious display by the Woombye Under 23 team, who scrapped their way back into the game after being behind three times, was an insight into how the FQPL Mens team would perform at the Lions Den on Saturday night. The game concluded 3-3 and Noosa would rue their opportunities to close the game out, though chances created came from kick and flicks rather than real control of the match.

Following the recent 3-3 draw at Gympie, the Noosa Lions Mens team have shown greater resolve to protect a lead and it required a fantastic ten-man team effort to see off Woombye, with a deserved 2-1 home victory.

The visitors started strong, applying early pressure. In the 6th minute, Harry Neill had to clear off his own line. Shortly after, a dipping Woombye free kick from about 35 yards, was watched carefully just over the crossbar by Noosa ‘keeper Cameron Boldy. Playing with the wind, Woombye continued to press. In the 11th minute, a through ball behind Noosa’s busy defence almost led to a goal, but Boldy made a crucial save and was again called into action in the 20th minute, to make a smart save from a close-range shot.

Noosa didn’t threaten the Woombye goal until the 24th minute, Oli Williams heading narrowly wide after two shots had been blocked by the Woombye defence. A few inutes later, a mistake by Boldy, passing straight to a Woombye forward led to a desperate tackle by Nick Cookman who was duly shown a red card and a penalty awarded. Boldy redeemed himself by saving the penalty and this galvanised the Lions into action. For the rest of the half, the team’s energy and organisation was such that there was no sign they were playing a man short.

Williams volleyed over the bar from a Sam Boldy cross and was then fouled badly on the half-way line, the referee choosing a yellow card for the offence. From the free-kick, Williams enacted his own punishment, brushing off one defender, turning inside another and smashed home a fantastic left-footed effort to give Noosa the lead, 1-0.

Late in the half, Woombye showed their intent with a strong header that went just over the bar from a corner. Deep into injury time, a deep cross to the far post allowed Woombye to head home an equalizer, making the half-time score 1-1.

Woombye again started the second half stronger, with one crisp left-footed shot dipping just wide. Noosa were sitting deeper and looking to hit Woombye on the break, In the 60th minute, Max Adey chased down a goal kick into the corner, pulled it back for Sam Boldy, who took a touch and thumped it high into the near post, but it was well saved by the Woombye goalkeeper.

In the 66th minute, Jarvis Bennell was replaced by Luke Beckinsale, and Sunny Law came on for Sam Boldy. The substitutions had an immediate impact! A brilliant through ball from the halfway line sent Sunny Law free, and he took his chance extremely well to make it 2-1 for Noosa.

In the 75th minute, there was another great save by Cameron Boldy and Woombye were pressing hard, but Noosa were determined in their defence and working hard for each other. As the clock ticked down, Oli Williams was replaced by his brother Jack, who immediately picked up a yellow card and then had a well-struck shot tipped over the bar following a great through ball from Law.

In the 88th minute, Cameron Boldy made a fantastic save down low from a header at the back post to keep the score at 2-1. Isaac Metherell came on for Max Adey as an extra defender. Sunny Law then ran onto a great pass from Takaishi and his shot was also tipped over the bar. There was still time for Woombye to create some nervous moments for the home crowd, but the Noosa team held firm and were deserved winners. A hard-fought win and a tremendous team effort to play for seventy plus minutes with ten men against a strong Woombye side.

The Lions play Gympie at home on Tuesday night (8:30pm kick off) and then match up against Woombye again next Saturday at Woombye.