



THE HOWLER

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The Defenders: Part 3 - How the mighty fall

Wolverines tamed in regional semi final of the Puma Cup despite a heroic 11th hour fight back.

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“Nobody goes undefeated all the time” (Wilma Rudolph)

The Wolverines approached their regional semi final of the 2019 Puma Cup the same way they have every game this season, with a quiet confidence. A confidence that comes with being the defending champions, the benchmark against which all teams are held.

Even with our opponents, Puma Cup debutantes The Ponds HS, boasting players such as an U16 Socceroo and as Sydney FC academy star, our determination was resolute. But it seemed we had finally met our match.

After a rousing pre-match speech from captain Lleyton Coleman the whistle was blown and our title defence was underway once again.

The Wolverines came out hard and fast, counting on an early intimidation tactic to unsettle the youthful Ponds side. The Wolverines managed to dominate possession as striker and resident skull cracker Bilal Kabi teamed up with his captain to unleash strike after strike on The Ponds keeper.

As our attackers tested The Ponds defenders our own showed their strength as midfielder Cayleb Senico bulldozed his way through the field, knocking down one player like a bowling



Boys Rugby League

Thursday 30th May
Whalan Reserve
9:00am



Zone Athletics

Thu/Fri 30-31st May
BISP 8:00am



Girls Rugby League

Week 6
Whalan Reserve
9:00am

Upcoming Sport

pin, to try and put the ball within striking distance.

But for all their efforts the Wolverines seemed to be unable to find their target as The Ponds, unrelenting, continued to push back.

The status quo was finally broken, however not in the Wolverines favour. A well timed strike at the top of the box snuck past our keeper to put the Wolverines behind for the first time in almost a year.

The boys shook off the blow, and with a few substitutions, looked for the chance to put them back in the game. But the football gods seemed to be against us as the Ponds found their second goal and the Wolverines headed into half time on the verge of defeat.

After a quick half time talk, and the kinks ironed out, play resumed.

Once again the Wolverines came out as fast and as furious as ever, still determined to hunt down those two goals to put them back in the game. But The Ponds had other plans. As they drew inside our defensive half, a lapse in communication in our defensive line saw the ball deflect off one of our own players and into the path of a Ponds winger right in front of the goal. The Wolverines were down by three with only 20 minutes of play remaining.

As play restarted for the third time, the task of defending our title looked all but lost as the mammoth weight of a three point margin began to sink in. But with their backs against the wall the Wolverines mustered the last of their never say die attitude and hit The Ponds with everything they had.

Within moments of the third restart the Wolverines clawed their way into The Pond's goal box. As they came into striking range the ball fell at the feet of Bailey Burrows-Dukamp who sent it all the way home to find the Wolverines first goal of the game. Their spirit renewed the boys rallied, wasting no time with celebrations, they grabbed the ball and ran it all the way back to the centre for the restart. As The Ponds kicked off the ball was quickly stolen by the Wolverines who wasted none of their precious remaining minutes in taking the ball deep into enemy territory. Once again Bailey found himself with the ball just outside of the box, with little time left to waste he launched the ball towards its't target. Time stood still as the ball defied the laws of physics and curled around the keeper and into the net. The watching Wolverinoes went wild, the Wolverines were back in the game with their second goal in less than 90 seconds of play.

With the ball back in the centre for the restart, it was clear now that the Wolverines were not letting their title go without a fight. It was also clear to The Ponds that they had messed with a Wolverine and were about to get the claws, as they resorted to petty time wasting tactics that saw them receive two yellow cards for their efforts.

As the clock ticked down the Wolverines dominated play, moving the ball into their attacking half more times than they had all game. The boys did their best to look for the goal that would equalise the game and send them into sudden death extra time. Reprieve almost came when Chris Wicks was taken down inside the box, but was sadly not rewarded with a potentially game saving direct penalty.

The crowd grew restless and the boys charged one, flooding the goal box after every throw in, corner and free kick, hunting furiously for that third goal. But alas, it did not come. The final whistle blew signalling the end of the game and our title defence.



It was one of the most spirited fight backs in the Wolverines history. The boys showed just how strong a team they are to come back from certain defeat to almost clinch victory.

Their title may have been taken, but the boys made sure that it wasn't given without a fight.

With this loss the Wolverines season comes to an end for 2019. A big thanks to all the boys for playing so hard and committing to the team.

Also a big thanks to Matt Robinson for returning to Wyndham no longer a player, but as a coach. And to all the former Wolverines who attended the game, its great to see just how far The Wyndham Sports Academy loyalty extends.

Once a Wolverine. Always a Wolverine.

