

## John I Dent Cup Round Twelve Wrap



By Tom Soulsby

### Match of the Round: Wests v Tuggeranong Vikings at Jamison Oval

The Tuggeranong Vikings have kept their unbeaten start to the season in tact, downing second placed Wests in a thriller at Jamison Oval, winning 25-19.

The victory was the Vikings tenth from as many games this season, meaning they now hold a 16 point buffer at the top of the John I Dent Cup ladder.

The match was the first time the two sides had clashed since their round 3 encounter which saw the Vikings win 19-17, and with a strong crowd on hand the game again went down to the wire.

With ten minutes to go, Wests held a 19-12 lead and looked set to be the first side to beat the Vikings this year, but thanks to an intercept try to Rodney Iona and a full field piece of brilliance after the buzzer by winger Jake Knight, the Vikings snatched the victory.

Vikings coach Brad Harris was very pleased with his side's ability to grind out the win but does believe the side will have plenty to improve come finals time.

"We certainly had to work for it today and we left it late but I thought it was a good sign of character that we were able to come from one try down with ten minutes to go and score a couple of tries of our own, it was very pleasing," Harris said.

"We will need to improve and move forward if we want to have a shot come September."

The Vikings started the first half very strong, dominating the early stages with University of Canberra Brumbies player Zack Holmes having a stand out half controlling the game through some vital pinpoint kicks into touch.

A lack of ball and silly handling errors cruelled any chance Wests had of gaining momentum in the first 20 minutes, allowing Tuggeranong to skip to a 6-0 lead.

But after withstanding a ton of pressure on their line, Wests finally fought back and scored the first try of the game through winger Gareth Watts who touched down in the corner.

This new found confidence saw Wests control the rest of the half and despite heading into the breakdown 9-5, they were certainly looking the better side.

Wests fly-half Gus McKercher was instrumental in the first half directing his side around the paddock with some crisp passes and a deadly kicking game, while outside centre Junior Luteru made some damaging runs.

The second half saw both sides continue to attack each other's line, with Wests taking the most of their opportunities scoring two tries through Mal Barnes and Peter Raines to hold a handy lead with only minutes remaining.

But as the Vikings have done all year they fought back and scored two tries in the last ten minutes to win the match and keep their winning run going.

Wests coach Craig Robberds was shattered by the loss and conceded that his side should of won the game with plenty of opportunities in the dying minutes to win the match.

"Obviously very disappointing, it probably should of been a win or at least a draw," Robberds said.

"But full credit to the Vikings, they stuck at it and got one home at the finish."

The win means the Vikings will head into their scheduled bye this week with a perfect record, allowing them time to rest and recharge their batteries before making a charge for the title in the second half of the season.

While Wests will be looking to return the winner's circle next week and cement second place on the ladder when they travel to ANU to face the winless Uni-Norths.

**Tuggeranong 25** (Rodney Iona, Jake Knight tries; Zack Holmes 1 conversion, 4/5 penalty goals) **bt Wests 19** (Gareth Watts, Peter Raines, Mal Barnes tries; Gus McKerchar 2/3 conversions, 0/2 penalty goals) at Jamison Oval

# Royals v Queanbeyan Whites at Phillip Oval

The Queanbeyan Whites have returned to the winner's board after outclassing Royals with an impressive 29-14 win at Phillip Oval.

The victory was the Whites first since their 37-20 win over Uni-Norths in round 7 and coach Adam Fahey praised his side's determination to get their season back on track.

"I am really pleased with that result, it certainly feels good to have a win," Fahey said.



"It's a credit to the players for not giving in and sticking together and through a bit of hard

work and commitment it has helped to expose the problems."



Despite the win, the Whites still sit four points behind fourth placed Gungahlin on the John I Dent table but will have their chance to apply further pressure on the Eagles when the two sides face off at Campese Oval next week.

As for third placed Royals, their brilliant start to the 2013 season is starting to go downhill

with the side now dropping two games in a row and with a massive game against the resurgent Easts next weekend, the task doesn't get any easier.

### Queanbeyan Whites 29 bt Royals 14 at Phillip Oval

### Easts v Uni-Norths at Griffith Oval

Easts have poured more misery on Uni-Norths's dismal start to season with an emphatic 45-15 win at Griffith Oval.

The win is the second on the trot for Easts after downing the Whites last weekend and coach Jeremy Osbourne credited his sides performance to outclass the struggling Owls.

"It was a really good win, so as a club we are really happy with how we are going," Osbourne said.

"I don't think the club has won two in a row for 5 to 6 years so obviously we are very pleased.



The win means Easts still remain in contention for a top four finish and will head into next weeks match against an out of form Royals team as favorites.



As for Uni-Norths, the season from hell continues with no wins from their first ten games this year and face an even bigger challenge next week when they play second placed Wests.

Coach Joe Hedger was disappointed with his side's effort and blamed one crucial decision in the first half as the downfall of his team.

"I thought we had all the momentum in the first 30 minutes, we were dominating with

position but just one bad choice turned the whole game around and we found ourselves on the back foot," Hedger said.

"That one mistake just damaged the whole remaining of the game and we really had nothing to answer, so full credit to Easts."

#### Easts 45 bt Uni-Norths 15 at Griffith Oval