

Butchers carve out rare winning double

Rats cling on to title hopes after washout

SOUTH COAST CRICKET
By MIKE DRISCOLL

A WEEK after enduring the hottest day of the season, heavyweights Oak Flats were stranded by a washout when a broken water main near Keith Grey Oval forced the second day's play against Albion Park to be called off.

The Rats had already taken first innings points and needed only seven Park wickets for an outright win, but when an already wet outfield was drenched by overnight rain last Friday, no play was possible on Saturday.

"It's a bit frustrating, but one of those things you can't do anything about," Oak Flats skipper Mick Atkinson said.

"The water main next to the ground broke on Tuesday and flooded the outfield.

"We might have been able to get on had it not rained Friday night, but that put an end to it."

Albion Park secretary Terry Burns said the broken water main, adjacent to the southern end of the ground, had a massive impact.

"It put a hole in the road like a bomb when it broke," he said. "It's fixed now but when it busted it flooded half the ground."

With Warilla beating Lake Illawarra, Oak Flats now trail the Kookaburras by six points in the race for the minor premiership.

"We'll have to beat Lake Illawarra in the one-dayer and Warilla in the last round to be minor premiers.

"That's what it will probably come down to," Atkinson said.

Meantime, the second day of Kiama's home clash against Shellharbour was also washed out, though fourth-placed Kiama had already claimed first innings points on day one.

In other games, Gerringong kept their semi-final hopes alive with an impressive win over The Rail at Gerry Emery Oval.

Resuming at 1-45 chasing 136, Gerringong were bowled out for 162, with Matt Junk (34) and Hayden Horne (34) top-scoring.

Col Yeaman took 5-55 for The Rail, who batted poorly in their second dig to finish on 9-67, a lead of only 41.

Dan Jones took 3-27 for Gerringong, who now trail Kiama by 24 points with four rounds to play.

Elsewhere, an unbeaten ton from Shane Cody wasn't enough for Illawarra to chase down Warilla's 8-338 at Oakleigh Park.

Cody made a fighting 107 but the Lakers were always in trouble and needed a 94-run 10th wicket stand between Cody and Tony Panecasio (12) to make a respectable 205 in tough batting conditions.

Gavin McCauley took 4-30 and Ellis Dale 3-19 for the Kookaburras, who finished the day at 6-38 in their second dig, with Brendan White and Aaron Henry taking three wickets each for Lake.

ILLAWARRA CRICKET ONE-DAY FINAL

By MIKE DRISCOLL

AN unbeaten half-century from 17-year-old Joe McDevitt guided Northern Districts to a tense four-wicket win over Keira in yesterday's Illawarra one-day final at North Dalton Park.

It was the Butchers' first top-grade trophy in six years and they made it a winning double after also claiming the second-grade one-day crown by beating Dapto in the decider.

McDevitt, who joined Norths this season from Corrimal, made an unbeaten 62 after striding to the crease with his side 3-41 and chasing 148 for victory.

His partnership with skipper Mark Johnson (27) steadied the innings. Then, with Norths in trouble at 6-99, McDevitt and Josh Colmer (20 not out) sealed victory.

"We've really improved as a club the last couple of seasons and it's a great reward to win a trophy," Butchers first-grader Neil Ryan said.

"Getting Joe and Mark Johnson and Stuart Tobin to the club this season has made a huge difference and Joe and another youngster Eric Denhartog had great games for us in the final.

"We're in the top four in the two-day comp and our next goal is to make the premiership final."

Keira skipper Graeme Batty won the toss and the Lions battled for most of their innings, though 147 was a reasonable total given that the overcast conditions and afternoon drizzle made it tough on both teams.

Keira all-rounder Neel Honavar (39 not out) top-scored and along with Jonathan Cook (23) and opener Mark Johnston (35) ensured the Lions set a competitive target.

Eric Denhartog (3-20) and Johnson (3-32) were outstanding with the ball for Norths.

The Butchers have now won four one-day titles since the 1999-2000 season, while their last trophy came in 2004-05 with the prestigious two-day premiership.

Meanwhile, Norths (6-140) beat Dapto (9-150) in the second-grade final with four overs lost to rain.

Norths Lee Turner was man of the match, making an unbeaten 38, which included returning to bat after he was struck in the head by a bouncer.

West's are the third-grade one-day champs after a six-wicket win over University.

West's dismissed the Students for 91, with man of the match James Nairn taking 5-12.



On a roll: Butchers all-rounder Stuart Tobin (left) successfully appeals for lbw against Keira skipper Graeme Batty in the one-day final at North Dalton Park. Batty, above, can't believe the decision. Pictures: GREG TOTMAN

Thashing puts Dapto back in groove

By MIKE DRISCOLL

PREMIERS Dapto put the speedbump of two losses in three games behind them to consolidate top spot with a 237-run thrashing of Wollongong on Saturday.

Coming off losses to Keira in the premiership and one-day semis, Dapto responded with a batting bonanza on day one, making 4-348, then rolling Wollongong for 111 on day two.

Having banked 300-plus in the extreme heat of day one, Dapto bowlers enjoyed cool conditions on the second day, bowling out the visitors in 37 overs.

Dapto spearhead Tommi Bozinovski took 5-38 off just 10.5 overs, while Dale Scifleet and

Greg Wray took two wickets each. Meanwhile, Northern Districts claimed 15 Helensburgh wickets in one afternoon to post a dominant first-innings victory at Helensburgh Oval.

The Butchers posted 203 in the searing heat of day one but their bowlers applied the blowtorch on day two, with the Burgh dismissed for just 46, after resuming at 0-9.

Helensburgh fended off the outright, finishing at 5-73 in their second innings.

Eric Denhartog had match figures of 4-27, while Stuart Tobin took 5-10. Josh Piper was unbeaten on 38 in the Burgh's second dig.

At Keira Oval, Keira went within two wickets of an outright win over Wests, taking 18 wickets in 80.1

overs. Defending 9-302, Keira dismissed Wests for 54 and had the visitors 8-155 in their second dig.

Kyle Kruger took 5-15 in Wests' first innings, while James Pirie took 3-23 in the second dig.

Wests skipper Graeme Smith (29) and Matt McKenzie (32) saved their side from outright defeat.

Finally, University consolidated second spot with an impressive win over Balgownie.

Bally resumed at 0-26 chasing 252 and were 1-93 before being bowled out for 181. Adam Berwick (44) top-scored while Richard Sykes (4-35) and Grahame Stinson (3-52) did the damage for Uni.

Ladder: Dapto 62, Uni 56, Keira 52, N Districts 45, Balgownie 45, Wests 33, Pt Kembla 30, Wollongong 28, Helensburgh 26.



MITCHELL JOHNSON

Pace may be our ace in tournament: Waugh

CRICKET WORLD CUP
By GREG BUCKLE

BANGALORE, India: Steve Waugh says Australia's decision to rely on pace bowling to defend their World Cup title is risky but could be a winner.

Waugh, who captained Australia to World Cup victory in 1999, says relying on strike bowlers Brett Lee, Shaun Tait, Mitchell Johnson and Doug Bollinger is an unusual move for a tournament being hosted by India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh from February 19 to April 2.

"We've taken an aggressive ap-

proach by picking four fast bowlers, which I'm not sure any other country has done," Waugh said.

"This is a strategy which is either going to work very well or not work well at all."

Australia have picked only one frontline spinner, Jason Krejza, in their 15-man squad.

While Krejza will have some assistance from part-time slow bowlers David Hussey, Steve Smith and Michael Clarke, Ricky Ponting's defending world champions are pinning their hopes on their quicks.

Mitchell Johnson says his partnership with new-ball bowlers Tait and

Lee will strike fear into the hearts of batsmen, whether the pitches are green tops or dust bowls.

Australia were due to test out their pace theory on India in a warm-up game in Bangalore overnight with another warm-up game on Tuesday against South Africa in Bangalore.

"I enjoy the fact Brett Lee and Shaun Tait get to run in with that new ball and do their job," first-change bowler Johnson said.

"We're still going to try and bowl short balls over here and we know a lot of Indian batsmen, especially, aren't too keen on it.

"Shaun bowls very fast and likes to

bowl that short ball and I think that [play] could work over here, so we're in a pretty good position with our bowling attack.

"We can all bowl in that 140km/h to 150km/h bracket. Shaun and Brett can bowl over that as well.

"No-one is really keen on facing anything like that. We'd be one of the only teams going around like that so I think that's a bonus for us."

While Lee was a star of Australia's 6-1 series win in the one-dayers against England over the past month, Johnson said he was also pleased with his six victims at an average of 23.83, going at 4.98 runs per over.