

AUSTRALIA WINS FIRST MATCH ON IRISH TOUR

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The AAFC U23 side has notched up it's first win on it's tour of Ireland, defeating Bishopstown by 10 points in perfect conditions on Friday night.

After a day of sightseeing taking in sights of Cork, the Blarney Castle and short burst of shopping, the time arrived for the Australian side to jump on the bus and head to the Cork Institute of Technology stadium for the first match of the tour against County side Bishopstown. The excitement in the rooms prior to the game was electric. In front of what was now a sizable crowd, Western Australian Umpire Colin Gray held the round ball aloft and the game was underway. Fraser Pinkney fed the ball straight down the throat of Ben Dowd and the ball was immediately into the Australian forward line. Scott Horsborough took a strong mark and duly converted an over to register the first score on tour. The Australians continued to have most of the play in the first term however scoring was proving to be difficult for many reasons; the round ball being mainly to blame but also a very talented Bishopstown goalkeeper was proving a tough obstacle to overcome. The game was being played at an amazing pace and standard and many rotations had to be made through the bench to ensure the Aussies had the run needed later in the match. The Bishopstown boys took the early lead however due to a clever “under” and the match look like being an armwrestle.

Quarter Time

AAFC U23	0-1-3 (6)
Bishopstown	1-1-1 (10)

The second quarter progressed much the same as the first and was largely a battle of the first. Pinkney, Dowd and Woods were providing plenty of drive from the midfield with the South Australian pair of Jordan and Hazeldine proving impenetrable across half back. Overs to Watts, who was proving a handful up front, and Ellis, whose pace was troubling the Irish, progressed the scores along nicely for Australia however opportunities for “unders” were continually thwarted by the Irish keeper.

Half Time

AAFC U23	0-3-3 (12)
Bishopstown	1-3-3 (18)

Coach Bob Cross pleaded with the boys to deliver more run in the second half and his instructions were followed to the letter, with the young Aussies delivering their first under of the tour, with Jack Watts finishing off a sensational passage of play where the ball just about passed through the hands of every Australian player. The crowds generous applause was then turned into rowdy cheers as the boys put into action their rehearsed celebration. The ledger was squared shortly after when the Bishopstown side managed an under of their own with plenty of numbers pushing forward and crowding Australian goalkeeper Brendan Iezzi, who was doing an excellent job

despite his lack of experience. The Irish boys looked like they were starting to tire and with plenty of run left in the young Aussie legs, they started to gain control of the match. Another under to Australian Captain Wedgwood had them back in front and combined with three overs from McGuinness, Watts and Ellis, the game looked like slipping away from Bishopstown.

Three Quarter Time

AAFC U23	2-6-6 (36)
Bishopstown	2-4-4 (28)

The last quarter was one of missed opportunities with both sides peppering the goals. Bishopstown found a little bit of spark early in the last term, but some solid defence from Jordan, Heller, Richter and McKenna, combined with some wayward kicking meant they could not quite bridge the gap. Another under to Wedgwood (and another well rehearsed celebration) sealed the match for the Australians as both sets of exhausted players fought on as best they could right to the end. When the siren sounded, both groups joined in the middle for the customary cheers and then it was back to the Bishopstown FC to enjoy some good old Irish hospitality. A game that was thoroughly enjoyed by the good crowd that turned out and by the players and officials of both teams.

Full Time:

AAFC U23	3-6-10 (46)
Bishopstown	2-5-9 (36)

AAFC Goalkickers:

Unders:

Wedgwood 2, Watts

Overs:

Horsborough 2, Watts 2, Ellis, McGuinness

AAFC Best:

Dowd, Jordan, Ellis, Heller, McGuinness, Watts