



Sunshine Coast Lightning's Kelsey Browne (left) battles for possession with Giants opponent Serena Guthrie in last night's Super Netball grand final at Brisbane's Entertainment Centre. Picture: GLENN HUNT

# Netball glory strikes quick as Lightning

GREG DAVIS

FROM ground zero to the top of the netball world in just 12 months, the Sunshine Coast Lightning completed a stunning sporting journey with a thumping 65-48 victory over the Giants in the Super Netball grand final.

This time last year, they were a logo. Now they are the very best of the best after overcoming a shaky start in the first quarter to relentlessly bolt to glory in front of 8899 spectators at the Brisbane Entertainment Centre.

The Melbourne Storm-backed Lightning simply blew the Giants off the court in the last three quarters to win the inaugural Super Netball crown in their first season.

It is the third year in a row that netball supremacy resides in Queensland after the Firebirds won the 2015 and 2016 trans-Tasman titles.

Captain Geva Mentor was mighty in defence and superstar Caitlin Bassett was a tower of strength at goals shooter but every Lightning player did their job superbly as the Sunshine Coast kicked away.

They trailed by two at quarter-time but led by five at half-time. They were 10 in front by three-quarter-time as the sea of Lightning fans dressed in yellow at Boondall reached fever pitch.

The "Lightning, Lightning, Lightning" chant echoed throughout the stadium in the final seconds and the elated Sunshine Coast players embraced each other on court after the full-time siren.

Bassett finished with 49 goals for the Lightning while Steph Wood added 16 goals after a ferocious battle with Giants defender Bec Bulley.

Kristina Brice had 24 goals for the Giants, while captain Jo Harten hit 20 of 25 attempts.

Third quarters had been the achilles heel for the Lightning in 2017 but they chose a good time to overcome their "premiership quarter" blues.

The Sunshine Coast extended their lead to nine goals after the Giants replaced Brice and sent veteran Susan Pettitt into the circle from goal attack.

The changes had little impact as the Lightning took a 48-38 buffer into the last quarter with the title at their mercy.

## Swans storm home

SYDNEY have kept their AFL season alive with a stunning, come-from-behind nine-point win over Richmond at the MCG yesterday.

The Swans kicked eight of the last nine goals in an engrossing contest to claim the 12.8 (80) to 10.11 (71) win.

The Tigers led from the early minutes of the match, but Kieren Jack put his side in front with a brilliant goal in heavy traffic with just under six minutes to go in the final quarter.

A pulsating last quarter went up another notch as Richmond tried to claw back the lead, but Gary Rohan sealed the famous win with a goal with eight seconds left.

Richmond kicked the first six goals of the game and led by 36 points in the second quarter before Sydney mounted a fightback.

John Longmire's men couldn't match the Tigers' blistering pace early, but they worked back into the game with their improved contested work.

The win could come at a cost after Lance Franklin went into the umpire's book in the

### RICHMOND V SYDNEY

	<b>TIGERS</b>	5.3 7.6 9.7 10.11	<b>71</b>
	<b>SWANS</b>	0.4 3.5 7.6 12.8	<b>80</b>

#### GOALS

**Sydney:** S Reid 2 G Hewett G Rohan I Heeney J Kennedy J Lloyd K Jack L Franklin L Parker T Papley W Hayward

**Richmond:** D Martin 2 J Riewoldt 2 S Bolton 2 J Castagna S Edwards S Lloyd T Cotchin

#### BEST

**Sydney:** J Kennedy Z Jones J Lloyd N Newman I Heeney D Hannebery

**Richmond:** A Rance B Houli D Martin T Cotchin J Caddy D Prestia

#### UMPIRES

J Mollison, M Nicholls, R O'Gorman, N Williamson

#### CROWD

58,721 at MCG

second quarter for a front-on bump on Connor Menadue that collected the young Tiger high.

Fans were given the Alex Rance-Franklin match-up they had wanted and Rance took the points, keeping his opponent to one goal. The pair were at each other all day in an often spiteful, always enthralling, one-on-one battle.

## Port overpower Lions

CHAD Wingard has slotted three goals for Port Adelaide who have overcome a plucky Brisbane by 40 points to take fourth spot on the AFL ladder.

Midfielder Ollie Wines (29 disposals, two goals) was instrumental in Port's 18.13 (121) to 12.9 (81) win yesterday at Adelaide Oval.

Brisbane trailed by only three points late in the second term, but Port booted seven of the next nine goals to seize momentum.

Wines formed a commanding midfield with Brad Ebert (24 disposals) and Sam Powell-Pepper, whose impressive debut season continued with two goals, five tackles and 16 disposals.

Winger Jared Polec collected 21 possessions before leaving the field late with an apparent hamstring strain.

Defenders Matthew Broadbent (20 disposals) and Darcy Byrne-Jones were prominent as the Power went to a seven-five win-loss record.

Wingard's triple treat was supported by two goals each from Paddy Ryder, Robbie Gray and Aaron Young.

Brisbane (two wins, 10 losses)

### PORT ADELAIDE V BRISBANE

	<b>POWER</b>	5.6 8.9 14.10 18.13	<b>121</b>
	<b>LIONS</b>	3.3 6.6 10.6 12.9	<b>81</b>

#### GOALS

**Port Adelaide:** C Wingard 3 A Young 2 O Wines 2 P Ryder 2 R Gray 2 S Powell-Pepper 2 C Dixon H Hartlett J Neade S Gray T Boak

**Brisbane:** R Bastinac 3 D Zorko 2 E Hipwood 2 H Andrews J Barrett L Taylor R Lester T Rockliff.

#### BEST

**Port Adelaide:** O Wines M Broadbent B Ebert C Wingard R Gray S Powell-Pepper D Byrne-Jones

**Brisbane:** D Zorko R Bastinac R Lester D Rich M Papparone.

#### UMPIRES

S Hay, D Margetts, A Stephens, C Deboy

#### CROWD

31,772 at Adelaide Oval

es) remain last on the ladder but showed some promise under first-year coach Chris Fagan.

Onballer Dayne Zorko (32 possessions, 12 tackles, two goals) was superb, Ryan Bastinac slotted three goals in his 21 disposals and Ryan Lester and Dayne Beams were industrious.

## Gibbs inspires Blues

CARLTON withstood a second-half Gold Coast comeback last night to secure a hard-fought 10-point AFL win.

The Blues dominated the opening stanzas but fell behind for the first time with 10 minutes to play before a late spurt secured a 12.11 (83) to 11.7 (73) victory at Metricon Stadium.

The loss was compounded for the Suns with recruit Michael Barlow stretched off in the fourth quarter with what looked like a serious injury to his left leg.

Bryce Gibbs was sensational for the Blues, leading the way in defence as the Suns wiped out a four-goal half-time deficit in the third term before kicking two goals in the final term. Gibbs finished with 43 disposals, 10 tackles, eight marks and those decisive goals. Jack Silvagni booted two final-term goals as the Blues backed up last week's win over GWS.

The Blues were dominant throughout the opening term, picking up 18 inside 50s to just three for the Suns. Their pressure told on the scoreboard as well with a three goal advantage at the turn.

The second-term was more

### GOLD COAST V CARLTON

	<b>SUNS</b>	1.1 3.2 7.6 11.7	<b>73</b>
	<b>BLUES</b>	4.4 6.8 7.9 12.11	<b>83</b>

#### GOALS

**Carlton:** B Gibbs 2 D Thomas 2 J Silvagni 2 B Boekhorst C Curnow E Curnow J Lamb M Wright S Petrevski-Seton.

**Gold Coast:** J Martin 3 J Lyons 2 A Sexton B Matera D Swallow M Barlow P Wright S Lemmens.

#### BEST

**Carlton:** B Gibbs K Simpson S Docherty L Jones M Kreuzer M Murphy E Curnow

**Gold Coast:** J Lyons D Swallow M Barlow G Ablett

#### UMPIRES

B Ryan, S Meredith, A Mitchell, D Harris

#### CROWD

11,936 at Metricon Stadium

one-way traffic for the Blues but they were guilty of missing some good opportunities to put the home team away.

The Suns made the Blues pay for their profligacy in the third quarter, sparking a comeback somewhat fittingly after Levi Casboul missed a set shot that would've taken the Blues' lead past 30 points.

## Beveridge pumps up Libba's return as Dogs search for answers

WESTERN Bulldogs premier-ship midfielder Tom Liberatore will return to the AFL today to help combat Melbourne's new found clearance and contested ball strength.

Dogs coach Luke Beveridge said Liberatore and defender Dale Morris will play in the important game at Etihad Stadium

after producing decent form in the VFL premiership.

"He (Liberatore) had an influential game," Beveridge said yesterday. "His second half was quite outstanding."

"He played the whole last quarter on the ball and got quite a few breakaway type clearances, he defended ex-

tremely well and explored a bit of outside stuff.

"Some of the things we asked him to attend to he has applied himself and we know he has been a really important player for us."

With the Demons' clearance expertise of concern, Beveridge is well aware of the

impact 25-year-old Liberatore can make in the midfield.

"We come up against something that we have to combat," Beveridge said. "We looked at our midfield and the players that go through there and we're evolving."

"I've been asked 'when will you settle that down?' I don't

think we will ever settle it down because they're a young group that can play in areas where we can get an advantage."

Beveridge dismissed Sydney's physical targeting of Norm Smith medalist Jason Johanissen at the SCG last round, but hinted the Bulldogs would be ready for it this time.

"There weren't any hard lessons from it. It was probably a bit of a wake-up call," he said.

"We're expecting that (from Melbourne) tomorrow."

Beveridge said a combination of "injury and form" were the contributing factors to three losses in the Bulldogs' past four games.