



NT THUNDER V REDLAND BOMBERS

THUNDER	122
4.3 9.7 10.10 18.14	
BOMBERS	55
2.4 3.4 6.7 8.7	

GOALS

NT Thunder: C Ilett 3 H Drogemuller 2 D Ewing 2 T Olango 2 S Rioli 2 N Yarran 2 M Coombes D Ferreira B McLean J Shannahan S Talbot
Redland: J Paine 4 C Clay J Huddy B Rees D Steven

BEST

NT Thunder: C Ilett H Drogemuller T Olango R Smith A Ankers S Talbot
Redland: J Paine S Cormick A Christensen M Allman C Cameron A Williams

NT Thunder's Abe Ankers kicks for goal during yesterday's NEAFL match against the Redland Bombers at TIO Stadium

Picture: JUSTIN KENNEDY

Ilett in his own class as Thunder rolls through

JOSH SPASARO

WE already knew there was nothing Cameron Ilett could not do on the football field.

And yesterday the NT Thunder legend was at it again in his team's comfortable 18.14 (122) to 8.7 (55) win over Redland at TIO Stadium.

The five-time club champion showed his versatility in an incredible last two minutes of the second quarter, booting two goals to give his side a match-winning 39-point lead.

The 2017 NTFL Chaney Medal winner started the game in defence and moved to the midfield, before shifting forward in the second term.

The move worked wonders, with Ilett booting three goals in the period.

His two just before the main break showed the freakish 32-year-old is also hard to contain as a full forward.

With two minutes remaining in the second term, he showed his brute strength to shrug off opponent Matt Allman after a booming kick forward from captain Shannon Rioli, playing his 100th game in Thunder colours.

From the ensuing bounce, hardworking midfielder Abe Ankers received the crumb from ruckman Ryan Smith, streaked away and kicked long to Ilett, who took a textbook

full forward's diving mark.

The Bombers were left to rue their inaccuracy, missing two early shots on goal they should have converted.

As in the second quarter, the Thunder finished the first term strongly with some excellent goals.

Strong marks to Lachlan Collihole and Hugo Drogemuller led to a Sam Talbot major, after he received a 50m free kick for taking a late hit.

And a nice, long kick from Collihole's left foot found Darren Ewing, who used good body work to shrug off his opponent and find Michael Coombes, which led to Coombes wheeling around to score.

That gave the Territory outfit an 11-point lead at halftime.

Jackson Paine was the standout for Redland in a convincingly beaten outfit, taking a number of strong marks and his duel with Thunder defender Justin Beugelaar was a beauty.

Soul Cormick was also heavily involved for the Bombers all afternoon.

In comical scenes, both teams had a five-minute break after the sprinklers at the Michael Long Centre end of TIO Stadium activated early in the third quarter.

The Thunder players did not regroup after that, with the Bombers kicking three unanswered goals in the term.

Jarrold Huddy's major near the final break was a classy effort, the ball booming off his left foot from 45m out for the visitors to trail by 27 points.

A Paine goal early in the final term gave the visitors hope.

But a Tony Olango major – showing great athleticism for someone so tall – to crumb Drogemuller's long-range attempt at goal and snap around his body was the goal of the match.

Just as importantly, that restored the hosts' 27-point lead.

And from there the Thunder asserted their ascendancy in a final term which saw them boot eight goals to two.

Essendon in touch but Pies stagnate

MICHAEL RAMSEY

ESSENDON'S AFL season remains alive but Collingwood's is all but over after the Bombers prevailed by 37 points in a fierce MCG contest.

The Dons led at every break yesterday and pressed their advantage in the final quarter to claim an 18.9 (117) to 12.8 (80) victory, keeping them in the hunt for a top-eight finish.

Orazio Fantasia led the way with five goals while David Zaharakis, Michael Hurley and Tom Bellchambers were all important.

The defeat leaves the Magpies stranded in the bottom four, with only five wins and 10 losses.

Coach Nathan Buckley continues to be under massive pressure.

"We just didn't work hard in defence and some of our offensive turnovers would have really hurt," Buckley said.

Adding to Collingwood's woes, midfielder Levi Greenwood faces suspension for a behind-play hit on Zach Merrett.

Greenwood is certain to be scrutinised by the match review panel after elbowing Merrett in the jaw in the third quarter.

The star youngster briefly went to the Essendon rooms but returned to finish with 25 disposals and two goals.

"We'll wait and let that run its course but luckily Zach's pulled up pretty well," Bombers coach John Worsfold said.

COLLINGWOOD V ESSENDON

MAGPIES	80
2.3 4.6 9.7 12.8	
BOMBERS	117
5.0 9.3 13.6 18.9	

GOALS

Essendon: O Fantasia 5 J Daniher 3 J Stewart 2 T Bellchambers 2 Z Merrett 2 A McDonald-Tipungwuti C Hooker D Zaharakis T Colyer
Collingwood: A Fasolo 4 J Elliott 3 B Reid J de Goey M Cox T Adams T Broomhead

BEST

Essendon: D Zaharakis O Fantasia M Hurley T Bellchambers Z Merrett A McGrath
Collingwood: S Pendlebury J Elliott W Hoskin-Elliott A Fasolo

UMPIRES

S Jeffery B Rosebury N Foot

CROWD

63,537 at MCG

Ablett first, now Mountford faces Fyfe

DECLAN Mountford's AFL education is proving more an overhang cliff than a learning curve.

After earning praise from Gary Ablett for his battle with the Gold Coast star a week ago, the North Melbourne newcomer could line up on Fremantle captain Nat Fyfe today at Etihad Stadium.

Fyfe likes playing against North, racking up 19 contested possessions in round five at Su-

biaco when the Dockers beat them by five points.

Twice in the previous two seasons, Fyfe has had three-vote Brownlow games against the Kangaroos.

But Mountford is having an immediate impact as a defensive midfielder and has shown that he will not be overawed, regardless of the opponent.

After making his debut in Round 1, Mountford was recalled three weeks ago, when

he responded by shutting down St Kilda star Jack Steven.

He then spent some time on Western Bulldogs playmaker Jason Johannisen before running with Ablett last weekend in the dual Brownlow Medalist's 300th game.

"He learned a helluva lot last week," said North coach Brad Scott. "He'll certainly go into this pre-season with a new level of expectation as to where his strength needs to be."

Bolton cautions Blues to keep cool

CARLTON players have been warned to keep their discipline and not seek retribution against Melbourne after their spiteful contest early in the AFL season.

Blues coach Brendon Bolton is demanding a response to any Demons' aggression, but without overstepping the line at the MCG today.

"We're a footy club that wants to play on the edge. We're learning to do that,"

Bolton said. "However, at the same time, we're a club that's extremely disciplined and we expect both this week.

"I think we've got the right balance, we haven't crossed the edge and had ridiculous reports or anything like that.

"It's about maintaining playing physical parts of the game really well, spoiling, tackling, checking when required, but at the same time not crossing the line."

Melbourne onballer Jordan Lewis was suspended for three games for a blow that left Blues counterpart Patrick Cripps with a fractured jaw in their round two match-up, while Demons forward Jesse Hogan copped two games for an off-the-ball hit on Blues defender Sam Rowe as Melbourne ran out 22-point winners.

"Our players are human, they understand what went on last time," Bolton said.