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North proves it can go all the way

ANDREW CAPEL

NORTH ADEL.	3.3 7.7 9.11 10.14	74
GLENELG	4.1 6.3 7.4 11.5	71

BEST
North Adelaide: Allmond, C. Combe, Moore, LeBois, Clisby, Hewett, Harvey.
Glenelg: Snook, Hannath, Agnew, Curran, Partington, Bradley, Parks.

GOALS
North Adelaide: LeBois 3, Ramsey, Young, Allmond, Jarman, Moore, W. Combe, C. Barns.
Glenelg: McBean, Reynolds 3, Bailey 2, Gregson, Bradley, Nicholson.

UMPIRES
Bryce, Schramm, Harris.

CROWD
750 at Glenelg Oval.

North Adelaide players celebrate after Ben Jarman, centre, kicked a goal against Glenelg yesterday. Picture: Sarah Reed

NORTH Adelaide is the real deal this season.

The Roosters, who slumped from first to ninth last season, are the last unbeaten team in 2020, after upsetting reigning premier Glenelg in a thriller at the Bay yesterday.

The 2018 premiers outlasted the Tigers in a tough, physical slugfest which went down to the wire, to win by three points.

Resurgent North, which led by 20 points halfway through the final term, when the exciting Kym LeBois kicked his third goal, had to hold off a withering finish from the home side to win its third consecutive game to start a COVID-19 affected season.

Carl Nicholson gave the Tigers late hope with a left-foot snap shot goal with a minute remaining, before the final siren ended Glenelg's late charge.

All three Tigers games have been decided by less than a goal this season, after they beat Norwood by three points in the opening round and South Adelaide by five last week.

The Roosters' gutsy win came after they had conceded the opening two goals in the opening five minutes and wasted opportunities in front of goal, having eight more scoring shots.

They also won without key late withdrawals – star recruit Billy Hartung (back) and ruckman James Craig (elbow) – prompting new coach Jacob Surjan to declare 2018 premier North was back as a force after a disastrous 2019 campaign when it sank to second-bottom after being docked four premiership points for the infamous 19th man preliminary final saga and then losing key players to the AFL.

"Glenelg had not lost at the Bay for 750 days, so for us to come here and get the win says a lot about our group," Surjan said.

"Stoney (Glenelg coach Mark Stone) is an outstanding coach and has his team up and running, so it was always going to be a big challenge for us, and to my boys' credit they stuck to the game plan and the way we wanted to play, and it was a great result.

"We showed that we are a very good team and have the desire to win the dirty ball.

"We put in the work in the off-season and during the COVID period and we're seeing the fruits of that.

"Our guys have shown great character and an ability to stick to the task, which hopefully can take them a long way."

By ZAC MILBANK

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North Adelaide survived a spirited comeback to edge out a fast-finishing Glenelg by three points at ACH Group Stadium.

Now the Statewide Super League's sole undefeated team, the Roosters were forced to defend grimly as the Bays finally sprang to life to kick four of the five goals scored in the final quarter.

But it wasn't enough to reel in Jacob Surjan's charges, who benefited from an extremely even contribution despite their inaccuracy in front of goal – North had 24 shots to Glenelg's 16 – almost proving fatal.

For the majority of the first three quarters, North defended in unison to ensure it would be difficult for reigning premier to score on their home deck.

It wasn't until the final half-an-hour that Glenelg was able to generate any fluency as Darcy Bailey ran on to a loose ball over the back to trim the margin to 13 points just 60 seconds into the final term.

But then former Carlton rookie Kym Lebois snared his third goal to stretch the difference back out to 20 points for North nearing the ninth minute.

A well-held Lewis Hender looked to have kicked his first major of the game when it just fell short on the goalline for LeBois to pounce from close range.

Mark Stone's men refused to lie down though, as forwards Luke Reynolds and Liam McBean began to benefit from quicker ball movement inside 50m.

Reynolds flew high for a chest mark from a McBean pass before converting his 30m set shot as the Tigers gained momentum.

Suddenly the Bays had the margin pegged back to just nine points when Reynolds marked on the lead, received a 25m penalty and nailed his second set shot in the space of three minutes.

North forward Robbie Young took a chest mark falling backwards but when he missed his set shot from 35m, the door was still ajar for the hosts to win.

Courageous Carl Nicholson timed his run nicely to crumb at the front of the pack and snap truly along the ground from 20m, putting the Bays within three points.

But with just little over a minute left on the clock, North was able to win the last centre clearance of the game and hold on for a valuable victory.

LeBois was a constant threat around the goals all afternoon, his two majors in the second term arriving at a critical juncture as North began to gain control of the contest.

The speedy left-footer spun out of traffic to snap from 20m before nailing a snap shot from 45m which bounced through to give the North fans plenty to cheer about.

No frills-pair Campbell Combe and Tom Schwarz did a power of work at the stoppages for the visitors, the latter celebrating his 100th League game with 24 disposals and seven tackles.

Jarred Allmond racked up 26 touches for the Roosters, one of them being a successful 55m set shot late in the first term.

North – who had Billy Hartung withdraw from the game with a back injury – had its win soured by Cam Hewett leaving the ground on crutches after the final siren after hurting his foot in the fourth quarter.

Glenelg got plenty of grunt from hardnuts Matthew Snook and Brad Agnew through the midfield, the pair continually throwing their bodies into the contest.

Snook laid a whopping 13 tackles to go with his 27 disposals and six clearances while Agnew had nine clearances and six tackles alongside his 23 possessions.

Jack Hannath found plenty of ball around the ground, the Tigers' ruckman tallying 21 disposals and 10 clearances with his 31 hit outs.

First-year defender Luke Parks did a solid job of keeping the dangerous Hender under wraps as the Bays missed Marlon Motlop, who was a late withdrawal due to a calf complaint.

	P	W	L	D	For	Agnst	Pts	%
North	3	3	-	-	233	199	6	53.94
W-WT Eagles	3	2	1	-	260	150	4	63.41
South	3	2	1	-	244	199	4	55.08
Glenelg	3	2	1	-	244	239	4	50.52
Sturt	3	2	1	-	168	196	4	46.15
West Adel	3	-	2	1	217	254	1	46.07
Centrals	3	-	2	1	156	215	1	42.05
Norwood	3	-	3	-	165	235	-	41.25