



In this week's edition, we wrap up an eventful week that saw the First Grade pushed to their limits and the youth sides send a warning to the rest of the competition, as well as speaking to Moshe Wakil, one of the most promising home grown talents Maccabi has ever produced.

With only three weeks till the season proper kicks off, the Hakoah FEDS club had a massive improvement with this week's trial games, with the youth teams notching up three wins, one draw and one loss. The First Grade drew in an exciting match against Gladesville Ryde, whilst the Reserves lost in the last minute of their match.

The First Grade drew 3-3 against Gladesville Ryde, a Division 1 side, on Sunday evening, in a spiteful clash that was marred by violence at the end. Playing on a suburban pitch without a Football NSW referee or linesmen, Hakoah took an early lead through a Neil Jablonski goal. Clinical lead up play down the left through Michael Randall, followed by a pinpoint cross, found Jablonski free in the box to slot home the first of the game.

However, a comical mix up at the back from a benign throw in caused an own goal for Hakoah shortly afterwards, leveling the scores at 1-1.

Despite being a division lower, Hakoah were playing Gladesville off the park, holding possession and controlling the game with ease. Soon enough Hakoah were 2-1 up through another Jablonski finish, and then 3-1 up through Rani Rimmer.

Fitness again began to terrorise the Hakoah team though, who were already short five players due to injuries. Gladesville mounted wave after wave of attack in the second period, eventually leveling the scores 3-3.

The game ended with an alleged fight between the Hakoah and Gladesville players, after a Gladesville player punched Hakoah goalkeeper Adam Sonnabend. Luckily, no serious injuries were suffered.

In the earlier game, the Reserves lost 1-2 in the last minute of the game. The boys fell 0-1 down midway through the first half, before finding an equalizer through Justin Wendemuth in the final moments of the half. But in sweltering heat, the team was unable to hold on in the dying minutes, conceding in the last play of the game.

The youth teams, playing against fellow State league Division One team Northbridge, had a day of huge success.

Northbridge, a brand new club in the competition, were up to show that they would not be the whipping boys of this season. There were feelings of nostalgia from some of the Hakoah stalwarts who have been around since the start of the Hakoah Feds youth teams four seasons ago, as they related to the Northbridge challenges ahead.

The Under 13s kicked off the day with a classy 5-3 win. The boys were brilliant in parts of the match, but were forced to show their character and mental strength as they fell behind 0-1, 1-2 and 2-3. Despite all this, the team was by far the better side, and deservedly won 5-3. Coach Barry Walker was “extremely pleased” with the performance, saying, “when they play football, they are an impressive team to watch”.

In another high scoring affair, the Under 14s were pushed to their limits with a 4-3 victory over Northbridge. The boys started slow, falling 0-2 down early on. However, the team bonded and continued to play their style of football, leveling the scores just after half time.



Another lack of concentration for a short period saw the boys punished, falling 2-3 down. It took all of their strength and determination to push Northbridge to the end, equalizing before stealing a win with only a few minutes remaining.



Mark Filler (centre) plays the ball up the line.



Jonathan Solomon (left) holds off two Northbridge players.

In another scary performance for the rest of the competition, the Under 16s demolished Northbridge 6-1. In a game of domination, the boys were completely in control for the entirety, scoring superb goals from all over the park and from a variety of players. As team manager Harry Wrublewski says, "11 goals in two games - brilliant. 5 scorers in a 6-1 result – excellent. Total team effort - priceless".



Gareth Milner (right) attacks the Northbridge defence



Sam Wrublewski (left)
storms down the right flank



Brad Karpin (number
5) attempts a bicycle
kick

In other scores, the Under 15s notched up a 1-1 draw, whilst the Under 18s fell to a 0-2 defeat. Both teams played well in parts, however defensive lapses cost the sides.

Being a Keeper Just Isn't a Glory Position

There is an old saying in football. A striker can miss 20 shots, but will be glorified for the one he scores that wins the game. A keeper may make 20 saves, but the one that he misses will result in the team losing. You can never win as the keeper.

However, last week a new era in the A-League was created, with Danny Vukovic from the Wellington Phoenix scoring the first goal by a goalkeeper in A-League history. Maybe the goalkeeper could be the glory boy after all.

With memories of Vukovic's penalty still in the minds of many, the Under 16s were awarded a penalty against Northbridge. The crowd simultaneously gasped as coach Mark Robertson called on goalie Harry Rosen to take the penalty. The score at the time was 4-1.

Up stepped Rosen, eyes focused intently on the goal ahead. As Coaching Director Barry Walker said, "he was a picture of determination and concentration".

Rosen placed the ball. Took what has been described as a 40 metre run up. The crowd watched, stunned at the history that was about to be made ...

Sadly, history was not to be made on this day.

In what can only be described as showing true empathy for his opposing keeper, Rosen smashed the ball straight at his opposite number one. There was a probably a moment of dull shock, before Rosen realized that he had to get back ... a whole 100 metres to his goal.

To quote Walker, "the site of Harry then having to "Sprint" back to his goal, all of a 100m away, will long live in the memory of all present - absolutely priceless - worth the admission fee on its own!"

It's just not good to be a keeper sometimes!

Some Bad News

The Hakoah Feds Club was dealt two pieces of bad news this week that affects both the First Grade and the Under 14s.

First Grader Deklan Gilmartin, one of the most exciting players in the First Grade side, has been snapped up by Premier League side Sutherland Sharks. Deklan is the epitome of professionalism, and we wish him success at Sutherland this season and beyond.

Jake Berkowitz, from the Under 14s, has suffered a bone infection of his ankle. This is a serious injury, and we all wish Jake a speedy recovery and hope to see him back on the pitch as soon as possible.

Moshe Wakil - A Homegrown Talent Taking on the World

For anyone that has come down to watch the First Grade this season, one player seems distinctly younger than anyone else in the First Grade side. This is not an illusion; this player actually is almost four years younger than the second youngest player in the side. However, the moment the game begins, all signs of his age disappear, as the young Moshe Wakil takes on opposing players with vigour and skill.

Moshe is only 16, yet has accomplished more than many in his short career thus far. Beginning his career at Maccabi for seven years, Moshe has also played for Sydney University, as well as Premier League sides Sydney Olympic and Apia Leichardt.

But this year poses new challenges for Moshe, as he plays his first season in the Opens, where the game gets quicker and stronger. Not that Moshe seems concerned in the slightest.

“I’m very excited for this season as it is my first season playing in a men’s division and I am excited to play at a faster and stronger pace”, says Wakil. “I’ve got great players in my team who have all welcomed me and made me feel comfortable. Since I’m the youngest in the squad it’s not always that easy.”



Moshe in action for NSW in the MAIGS in December 2010

Moshe has been trialed by Coach Mark Robertson in a range of positions thus far, but mainly has featured on the right side of midfield or as a centre forward. In any sense, Moshe is relishing the trainings and the games alongside the quality players of the First Grade, under the guidance of Robertson and Assistant Coach Alex Robertson.

“Mark, along with his father Alex are great coaches and I feel really privileged to be training under them. I’m enjoying their training sessions and methods as they are combining fitness and ball work skills, which I agree is the best way to improve. Robbo has shown faith in me and is helping me develop every week and I plan to deliver a great season for him, the club and of course myself in return.”

Many are unaware that Moshe trialed at Chelsea FC late last year, where he has been asked to return later on in the year. As he says, “It was the best experience and lives up to every expectation.”

Moshe has also played football in Italy, where he played against teams such as Inter Milan and Juventus. It has given him the “taste for what it’s like at the top”.



This season looks to be a big year for Moshe, as he chases his dream of playing professionally. However he knows that it will be a massive challenge that is not exclusive to what he does on the pitch.

“Having a career in football is every players dream but I know it’s not that simple and I’ll have to work very hard to get there as well as working very hard to keep my parents off my back who constantly nag about ‘keeping up with my studies’!”

Moshe and the First Grade side will be up against Woden Valley this Sunday 27th February from 4:30 pm at ES Marks in Kingsford.

That is this week’s edition of the Hakoah Feds Newsletter. Until next time, let your passes find the man, your shots find the goal, and your skills find the girls.

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