

## SUB-DISTRICT CRICKET

# Tigers tamed at last

## NO PANIC AS WERRIBEE'S WINNING RUN COMES TO AN END AGAINST OAKLEIGH

Luke D'Anello

WERRIBEE was in no mood to reflect on its 11-match winning streak on Saturday after Oakleigh inflicted its first defeat of the Sub-District season.

Instead, players were locked behind closed doors long after Saturday's 32-run loss at Warrawee Park.

While the Tigers won't be reaching for the panic button, skipper Shaun Dean was left disappointed after his side's middle-order crumbled under the weight of the Oaks' immaculate line and length bowling.

"We had a good 40-minute chat and the things we have to improve on all came out in an open forum. Everyone gets their say," Dean said.

"We'll go back on the training track and sharpen our focus."

Dean lamented the "timid shots" that ruined Werribee's chances of a successful run chase and said the "pressure might have got to a few guys".

The visitors started solidly in pursuit of Oakleigh's 273, with openers Matthew Dean (52) and David Wolfe (31) putting on 58 for the first wicket.

The Tigers' top order laid a strong platform on a pitch which offered little assistance to the bowlers.

Werribee looked to be cruising at 3-190 with 22 overs remaining. But Michael Freeman (17), Adam Alifracco (7), Jake Purton (1) and Heath Pritchard (0) lost their wickets in quick succession as the ladder-leader slipped to 7-211.

Star batsman Tim O'Brien had the perfect view of the carnage from the other end, as he searched for a partner to steer Werribee home.

Kyle Andrews (11) lifted the pressure valve momentarily with a couple of boundaries, but when he departed and Matthew Thom-



Werribee's Matthew Dean plays a cut shot on his way to 52 against Oakleigh on Saturday.

Picture: MARK DADSWELL

son (0) followed, the Tigers had slipped to 9-224.

No. 11 Jonathan Burton (9) looked comfortable before he was bowled, as the Tigers finished on 241 from 70.1 overs.

O'Brien batted patiently and played some eye-catching shots for 69 not out. He has 409 runs at 58.4 for the

summer and is finding his best form with finals imminent.

Werribee will also need to rediscover its best this weekend when it hosts second-placed Bayswater in a one-day clash.

But Dean did not subscribe to the theory that this was the loss the previously

undefeated Tigers had to have.

"No one says you can't go through undefeated. You do set yourselves to play the better sides," he said.

"It's not all doom and gloom, we've only lost one game, but I think a few guys might have to go back and reassess where they're at

with their own games in the middle-order.

"Sometimes it gets glossed over when the top order makes so many runs.

"Over two years, we haven't really failed too often.

"It was no good today — that wasn't a good performance at all."

## WDCA CRICKET

## Bellbridge flying at the right time

Cameron Magusic

BELLBRIDGE (9-167dec and 0-25) powered to its third outright victory of the Williamstown and District Cricket Association A-Turf season on Saturday, defeating Melton South PSCC (88 and 103).

Scott Walker (41 not out) provided stiff resistance as Bellbridge built a 79-run first innings lead.

Walker has had a productive summer, averaging more than 26, and is the third highest run-scorer for the club this year in A-Turf.

But Walker, who could be a contender for the Ron Dawes medal, played down his part in his club's winning performance.

"Look, it was probably just one of those things — I think, early on, (the pitch) was probably better to bat on," Walker said.

Having already conceded first innings points, Melton South PSCC put on its pads for the second time with the hope of avoiding an outright loss.

Melton was reduced to 5-18 from 11 overs, with three of the top five, including captain Blake Ivory, making ducks.

"We just haven't batted well enough all year. Today was, I guess, the culmination of a few sub-par performances with the bat," Ivory said.

Joshua Joy (48) and Anthony Yates (16) were the only Melton batsmen able to withstand the Bellbridge onslaught, which was led by Mark Crosswell (5-30).

After dismissing Melton South, Bellbridge was left to make 25 runs and reached the target in seven overs and with 10 wickets in hand.

Grand United will play Bellbridge in Hoppers Crossing next week after the Gorillas (206) beat Williamstown Imperials (8-205dec) in a close contest.

Liam Johnson (92) led the way for the winning side.

## TURF CRICKET

# Centurions hoping faith in youngsters pays dividends

Luke D'Anello

WERRIBEE Centrals' up-and-down Turf Cricket North A1 campaign ended with a loss against Sunshine Druids on Saturday.

The Centurions, who claimed the West B1 flag last summer, have experienced an eventful year, with coach Phil Crea departing to St Andrews after Round 4 because of a "falling out" with the club.

The locals have also struggled to string wins together, finishing in ninth spot with

four victories. Chasing Sunshine Druids' 6-216, the Centurions fought hard before being bowled out for 198.

The defeat means Werribee Centrals are set to be relegated back to West B1 next season, along with St Francis de Sales, Youlden Parkville and St Andrews.

"It's been a bit of a step up for the boys, but I think losing a few players obviously hasn't helped going up a level," Centurions skipper Aaron Edrich said.

"We went through that a few years ago as well and it

was time to blood some of the younger blokes, and most of them have had a fair crack this year."

Edrich heaped praise on youngsters Shaun Jennings, Michael Giles, Chris Hughes and Luke Allister.

Jennings has been a clear standout, hitting 265 runs at 22.1, including two half-centuries.

"They've all stood up and have said they've wanted to play in the firsts," Edrich said.

Edrich (25 wickets), Justin Davies (23) and Sam Crea

(17) have had fine seasons with the ball.

But Edrich said the Centurions needed to bolster their batting stocks during the off-season.

"We've probably still got the most lethal bowling attack — or up there anyway — but we've just struggled to put runs on the board," he said.

"We might have got away with it last year, but you don't get away with it when you go up a division, that's for sure.

"We've definitely got the

depth of bowlers in the twos.

"We need to recruit and get some batsmen.

"Three or four handy bats, and we'd be right up there I'd say."

Elsewhere on Saturday, Laverton (250 and 2-42) was too strong for Spotswood (134) in North Division.

In Senior Division, Asif Jan (121 not out) and Ryan Latham (88) helped Hoppers Crossing (4-323) to a thumping victory against Bentleigh (251).



Sam Crea was one of the Centurions star performers.