

Eagles' flying start devastates Tigers

ANDREW CAPEL

WOODVILLE-West Torrens has made a premiership statement.

A year after missing the finals, the Eagles on Saturday confirmed they are flag threats this season, with a convincing 20-point win over reigning premier Glenelg at the Bay.

Without two stars – captain Luke Thompson (hamstring) and Matthew Goldsworthy (glute), who was a late withdrawal in what was supposed to be his 200th game – the Eagles retained top spot with a ruthlessly efficient effort on the Tigers' home ground.

They won despite having 15 fewer inside 50s and are poised to be strengthened further by the recruitment of star VFL medium forward Sam Lowson.

The Eagles won their fourth game on the trot and stunned Glenelg in the first half with greater desperation and swift, classy ball movement.

At half-time, the Tigers had one more inside-50 entry but trailed by 40 points.

The effective Eagles, with Joe Sinor and Jordan Foote strong in the centre square and Jake Von Bertouch and James Rowe dangerous in attack, amazingly scored 11.3 from 23 first-half attacking forays.

The Tigers gave the Eagles a late fright, cutting a 44-point third quarter deficit to 15 in the final stanza, but the damage had been done.

"We were very good offensively in the first half," said new Eagles coach Jade Sheedy,

	EAGLES	4.2	11.3	14.6	16.7	103
	GLENELG	1.2	4.5	8.9	12.11	83

BEST

Eagles: Sinor, Rowe, Hall, Von Bertouch, Redden, Mansell, Foote.

Glenelg: McBean, Snook, Bradley, Partington, Proud.

GOALS

Eagles: Von Bertouch, Rowe 4, Firms, Hall 2, J. Hayes, Comitogianni, Poole, Carcuro.

Glenelg: McBean 5, Reynolds 2, Kluske, Allen, Weir, Snook, Agnew.

INJURIES

Glenelg: Merrett (ankle).

UMPIRES

Schramm Bowen, Morgan.

CROWD

831 at Glenelg Oval.

who has built a new game plan built on crisp ball use and fast transition. "Glenelg is a great side and came at us late – we still have to learn to be able to take some momentum out of the game when that happens – but we are developing to where we want to be."

The Eagles' desire and desperation was illustrated by a spectacular goal-saving tackle from Rhyan Mansell on Marlon Motlop in the third quarter. In contrast, Glenelg looked a shell of its former self until the final term.

After dropping three games in last year's minor round, the Tigers have now lost three in a row, including consecutive matches at home. Until being upset by North Adelaide two weeks ago, Glenelg hadn't lost



Glenelg's Matthew Snook earns a free as Eagle Rhyan Mansell dives into his back at Glenelg Oval. Picture: Mark Brake

at the Bay for 749 days.

Coach Mark Stone had his players behind closed doors after the game as he searched for answers. While the Eagles produced a strong team per-

formance, Glenelg relied heavily on Liam McBean, who kicked five goals, and midfielders Matthew Snook, Andrew Bradley and Luke Partington, who combined for 91 disposals.

Premiership Ladder

Teams	P	W	L	D	For	Agnst	Pts	%
W-WT Eagles	5	4	1	-	432	287	8	60.08
South	5	4	1	-	393	305	8	56.30
North	5	4	1	-	379	330	8	53.46
Glenelg	5	2	3	-	375	406	4	48.02
Norwood	5	2	3	-	357	394	4	47.54
Sturt	5	2	3	-	288	354	4	44.86
WestAdel	5	1	3	1	340	381	3	47.16
Centrals	5	-	4	1	304	411	1	42.52

By ZAC MILBANK

Woodville-West Torrens survived a spirited comeback from Glenelg to earn a valuable 20-point victory at ACH Group Stadium.

Leading by as much as 45 points midway through the third quarter, the Eagles were forced to steady during the final term after the Tigers piled on six of the last eight majors in the match.

Glenelg's AAMI Rookie Angus Weir produced a memorable snap during the third quarter to start the momentum swinging in his team's favour.

Jack Oatey Medalist Matthew Snook – who was once again outstanding for his side with 31 disposals, eight tackles and 12 clearances – nailed his set shot to have the hosts within 33 at the final change.

Then Liam McBean booted the first two goals of the final stanza to take his tally to five before fellow forward Luke Reynolds finished off his excellent work rate further up the ground with a third in succession.

But just as they had all afternoon, the Eagles continued to answer as mature-age forward Tristan Carcuro hit James Rowe up on the lead.

Rowe, now leading the race for the Ken Farmer Medal, then calmly slotted his set shot from 30m.

Carcuro was soon involved again after kicking his tricky set shot from the boundary just two minutes later to make Glenelg's fightback too difficult to execute, with the visitors leading by 28 points midway through the final term.

With the majority of the key stats categories even, the Eagles' efficiency inside 50m was illustrated by them having 15 fewer entries.

It didn't matter that captain Luke Thompson was sidelined with a corked thigh or that future SANFL 200 Club member Matt Goldsworthy (glute) was a late withdrawal for his milestone match, the contributors for coach Jade Sheedy were plentiful.

Past Eagles Club Champions Jordan Foote and Joseph Sinor gave their team

plenty of drive with 21 and 23 disposals each while Chris Hall and Jake Comitogianni also hit the scoreboard.

Launceston recruit Rhyan Mansell continued his impressive start to the season with 16 disposals and a goal-saving chase and tackle which prevented a certain major to Glenelg's Marlon Motlop late in the third term.

Reduced to 21 men for the majority of the match after defender Matt Merrett found himself on crutches at half-time, Glenelg had plenty of heart displayed by veterans Snook and Andrew Bradley.

Bradley, one of few Tigers to play four quarters of footy, finished with 35 disposals and 10 marks across half-back and the wings while Magarey Medallist Luke Partington had 25 touches and three clearances.

The Tigers now have a 2-3 win-loss record just inside the top four while the Eagles sit at the top of the table with an impressive 4-1 mark while playing full of confidence.

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