

Thunder faces hard task for finals spot

By GREY MORRIS

TERRITORY Thunder's boom QAFL recruit Brett Goodes says skill errors and unfamiliarity with teammates is damaging the team's quest for a historic finals berth.

Thunder slipped a game out of the top five following their 55-point loss to an experienced Labrador on the Gold Coast. It means they must win at least five of their last nine games to put themselves in the mix for the finals.

"Mistakes cost us the Labrador game, there were a lot of skill errors and our discipline let us down," a forthright Goodes said.

"We made a lot of changes after the Southport win as well and that did nothing for our chances against a very experienced and well drilled Labrador side."

Cameron Roberts (hamstring) and Mitchell Taylor (flu) missed the game, while Scott Taylor, Josh Chaplin and livewire Tiwi forward Dion Munkara were required for national under-18 championship duties.

"We got caught out without those blokes, Jayden Prior in his second game had to take (former St Kilda, Hawthorn and Sydney ruckman) Peter Everitt and there was former Brisbane Lion Tim Notting causing us some strife as

well," Goodes said. "Tappy (Shaun Tapp) played well when we moved him forward to try and fix our problems across half forward, but the problem is we need him in the back half where he plays a lot of his best footy."

"We had three first gamers over there (Gold Coast) as well, Tavis Perry, Caleb Hart and young Lochie (Lochlan Damarrandji) had to find out how we play pretty quickly."

Goodes said the number of changes and quality players moving in and out of the side was frustrating as the team fought to find some consistency and playing depth.

"When I was in the VFL with North Ballarat I had the same blokes with me for three or four years, we had plenty of time to work out how each other played," he said.

"I hope we can get the same side together for the rest of the season, too many changes will hurt us as we try to find out about each other."

Thunder has this week off because of the Queensland-Tasmania state game at Southport on Saturday.

Mt Gravatt is the next obstacle in Brisbane on June 19. A win over the fifth-placed Vultures will lift Thunder back into the top five.

Langham remains with Hockeyroos

By JESS WEBSTER

TERRITORIAN Heather Langham has retained her spot in the Hockeyroos national squad following a strong performance at the recent Australian Hockey League Championships.

The NT Pearls defender was among her side's best contributors across the series but concedes there is room for improvement.

"It's great to get re-selected in the squad and it means I'm still in the mix," she said.

"In certain games I played well, I don't think I was as consistent as I'd like to play. I think I did okay (but) I've still got lots of areas to work on."

Langham missed out on a spot in the national squad to Europe this month to play Germany, England, India and Ireland in preparation for the World Cup bid and Commonwealth Games.

Although disappointed on not making the side, Langham was looking forward to representing the NT again at the under 21 National Championships next month.

"It was bittersweet I guess. I am in the national squad and the AIS so that was a positive, but not to go away on tour is disappointing," she said.

"It would have been a good chance to get a few more games under my belt which is what I'm trying to do."

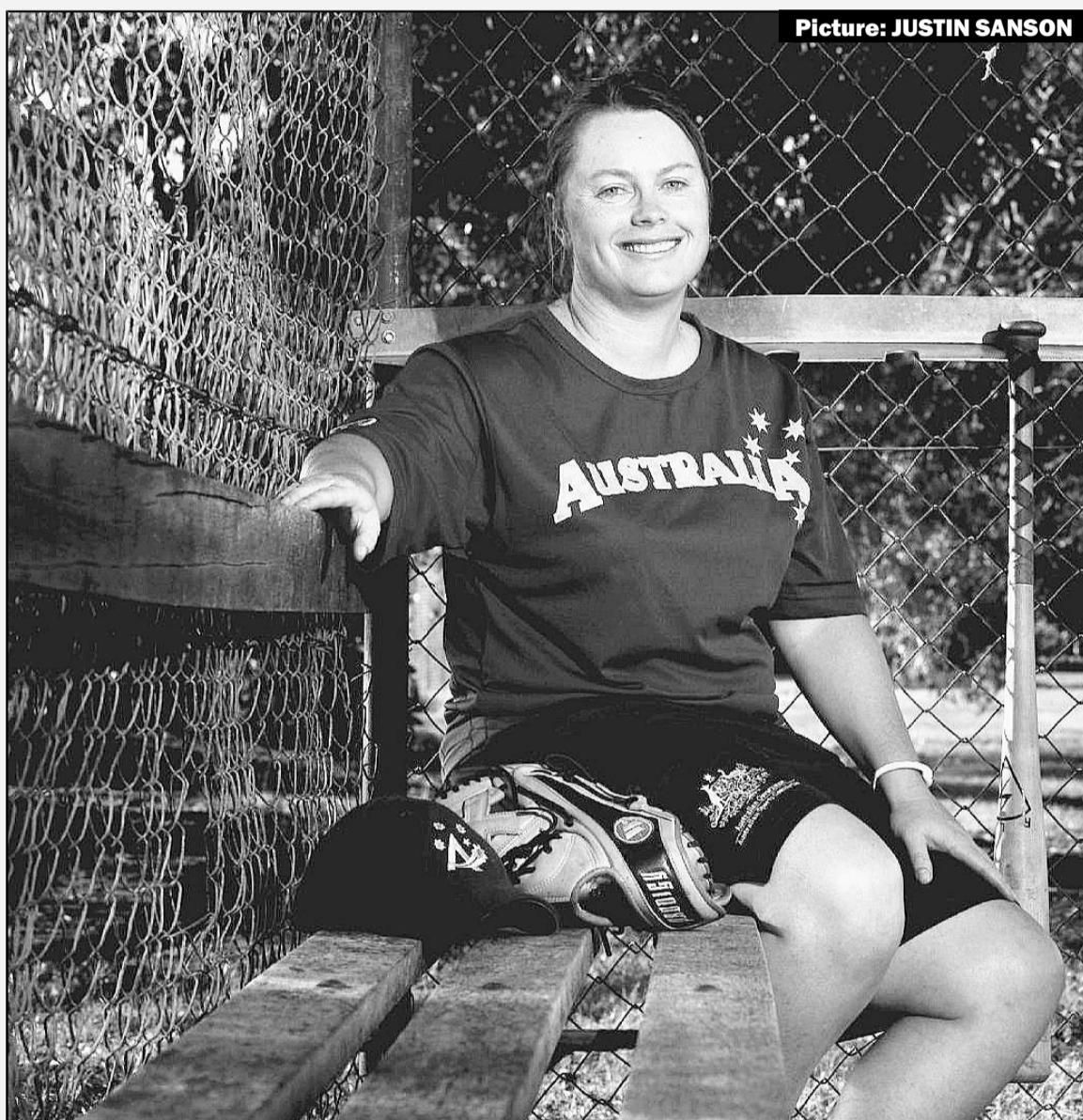
"Realistically, I'm not expecting to play in some of the major tournaments like the World Cup and Commonwealth Games until I have got some of that experience."

"I'm looking forward to the under 21s — I missed out last year so this is my last chance in that age group."

The Pearls ended the AHL tournament without a win but Langham says there was vast improvement within the side.

"It's disappointing that we didn't win a match, I think some of the scores didn't necessarily represent how we played," she said.

"I thought we definitely improved out of sight from the first weekend in Ipswich. Although we didn't get a win we played some really good games."



Picture: JUSTIN SANSON

WHO'S THE BOSS: Narelle Gosstray is the first woman to coach the junior Australian baseball team

Top End coach breaks new ground

By JESS WEBSTER

TERRITORY baseball coach Narelle Gosstray is blazing a trail for women in the sport after becoming the first woman appointed coach of the Australian junior side.

It is also the first year an all-girls side will travel to Japan for the World Children's Baseball Fair (WCBF) next month, which has been held annually since 1990.

The talented coach says her first official appointment from the Australian Baseball Federation (ABF) is so far a career highlight.

"From a coaching perspective it would be. Hopefully it's the first step for me on the way to becoming coach of the senior women's Australian team," she said.

"I'm looking forward to leading these girls and teaching them new

skills, just making sure they get everything they can out of this trip."

Gosstray has an impressive baseball pedigree which includes being the former second baseman for the Australian women's national team and has coached the Aussie Hearts on six international tours since 2005.

She has achieved a number of firsts throughout her career — including being the first woman to coach a men's Darwin Baseball League club (the Nightcliff Tigers) where she also plays as their starting pitcher.

Young Alice Springs junior Jemimah Heckathorn is the sole Territorian in the team.

NT executive officer Lisa Hooley believes Gosstray's achievements

are invaluable to the growth of the sport in the Territory.

"Baseball is often seen as a men's domain, it's great to see the ABF giving women the opportunity to play and officiate at the higher levels of our sport. It's wonderful for baseball and for the NT."

Gosstray started playing softball but switched to baseball at an early age where she has played and coached for the last 15 years — and there seems to be no end in sight to her honour roll.

"The chances of ever getting a role in the American Baseball League are pretty remote, although there is a woman that has done that ... but for me it's all about coaching the Australian women's team to a gold medal one day," she said.

AFL Results & Ladder

Round 9

SOUTHPORT	2.6	7.10	11.13	19.15	(129)
MT GRAVATT	2.1	6.4	7.10	11.14	(80)

GOALS — Southport: C Hughes 7 C MacLaren 5 B Scalzo J Van Unen M Payne M Fowler C Petterson D Pfeiffer G Screech. Mt Gravatt: N Gilliland 4 E Reading 2 A Pirika 2 C Murphy A Evans M Enright.

BEST — Southport: D Wise D Pfeiffer C Hughes C MacLaren D Putt G. Screech. Mt Gravatt: R Lake E Reading D Page A Evans D Hill J Furfaro.

LABRADOR	6.3	10.6	13.10	20.12	(132)
NT THUNDER	4.1	4.2	9.4	12.5	(77)

GOALS — Labrador: M Vigus 4 P Everitt 4 T Notting 3 S Trembath 3 R Alleyway T Grayson J Howard T Lester T Featherstone F Sleeth. Thunder: C Ilett 3 D Ewing 2 S Tapp 2 K Tyrrell R Kantilla L Damarrandji B Goodes J Dignan.

BEST — Labrador: T Featherstone S Wrigley R Alleyway D Mills C Allen N Stockdale. Thunder: B Goodes C Ilett K Tyrrell S Tapp B Palipuumini J Ilett.

MORNINGSIDE	7.4	10.8	19.12	26.16	(172)
WSTRN MAGPIES	3.2	6.5	6.5	11.8	(74)

GOALS — Morningside: T Upton 5 K Abey 4 A Nash 3 J Brown 3 D Evans 3 P Shelton 3 A Lucy S Faure M Rootsey D Bonney M Kimball. Magpies: J Spencer 3 G Lavey 3 L Scott D Hamill M Dowley K Reed V Pope.

BEST — Morningside: T Upton J Gough D Bonney P Shelton R Holman A Nash. Magpies: A Kitching G Moore G Lavey L Scott M Dowley J Rozynski.

REDLAND	6.2	11.5	11.6	15.7	(97)
BROADBEACH	5.1	7.2	11.6	14.7	(91)

GOALS — Redland: B Weightman 5 D Dzufer 2 S Clouston 2 T Manzone 2 J Charlesworth A Mueller B Passfield J Carey. Broadbeach: D Zorko 3 K Fulton 3 M Cooke 2 G Ryan 2 R Pantic J Emblem B Walters A Palmer. BEST — Redland: P Carse J Hackett J Norman T Salter S Clouston T. Manzone. Broadbeach: S Russell B Walters J Searl R Dierjes A Palmer R Clough.

BRISBANE LIONS	1.3	6.6	10.9	12.9	(81)
ASPLEY	2.4	3.8	5.10	9.14	(68)

GOALS — Brisbane: A Cornelius 6 B McCulloch A Raines J O'Brien C Stillier Murray T Selwood. Aspley: D Campbell 2 T Hartwig 2 M Shir S Carpenter S Tighe B Shade D Reid. BEST — Brisbane: A Raines T Selwood A Cornelius J O'Brien P Hanley B McCulloch. Aspley: D Reid R Copeland B Carroll S Tighe S Carpenter M Shir.

Ladder

Team	P	W	L	D	F	A	%	Pts
SOUTHPORT	9	8	1	0	1067	669	159.4	32
MORNINGSIDE	9	7	2	0	1058	761	139.0	28
LABRADOR	9	7	2	0	1023	742	137.8	28
BRIS LIONS	10	5	5	0	1078	1065	101.2	20
MT GRAVATT	10	5	5	0	885	1005	88.0	20
NT THUNDER	9	4	5	0	916	797	114.9	16
BROADBEACH	9	4	5	0	764	743	102.8	16
REDLAND	9	4	5	0	916	919	99.6	16
ASPLEY	9	2	7	0	765	1082	70.7	8
MAGPIES	9	0	9	0	536	1225	43.7	0

Next Week — Round 10

Saturday, June 19: Mt Gravatt v NT Thunder at Dittmer Park, Broadbeach v Western Magpies at Merrimac Oval, Brisbane Lions v Southport at Griffin Park, Aspley v Redland at Graham Rd. Sunday, June 20: Morningside v Labrador at Esplen Oval.

Territory trio in Queensland squad

By JESS WEBSTER

THUNDER midfielder Cameron Ilett, ruckman Kenrick Tyrrell and defender Shaun Tapp have survived the first cut to the Queensland open state side to play Tasmania on the Gold Coast on Saturday.

The trio was named yesterday in the 27-man squad with four omissions to be made during the week for the interstate clash.

Territory Thunder and Queensland assistant coach Murray Davis attributes the players' inclusion to their strong start to the QAFL season.

"I'm really pleased for them, it's a bit of a reward for their start to the season and how they have gone about it," he said.

Ilett is currently the leader of Syd Guildford Trophy race in the QAFL competition, awarded to the best player of the league each season.

All three were among Thunder's best players in their loss to Labrador at the weekend.

Tapp enjoyed his time in defence and booted a couple of goals up forward while Kenrick Tyrrell put in another good performance to add to his stellar season in the ruck.

Davis, who is Queensland's defensive coach, says size and depth is the key issue to overcoming Tasmania at Fankhauser Reserve.

"On the Southport oval there is obviously a lot of room to run and carry the football so that leg speed and midfield depth is going to be important," he said.

Zeph Skinner and Jarred Ilett were ruled out through injury while Darren Ewing, Brett Goodes and Bradley Palipuumini were unlucky exclusions.