

Sport

Waterpolo - BoV Premier League

Neptunes consolidate their top position

Willie Vassallo

Sliema Betsson 3
Neptunes Grimaldi 7
(0-1, 1-2, 0-2, 2-2)

Sliema are now mathematically out of the running for the league title, and the way they are finding so much difficulty in obtaining goals verifies this.

The last time these two rivals met, Neptunes won 8-3. This time they were a goal shy of the same score.

For the third successive time, when meeting teams above them in the league table, Sliema's goal tally has become a meagre one.

Man up wise they wasted all of their first six, and only managed to score in the last one, when the score and time were well against them.

Not that Neptunes could boast about their man up situations, as they only managed three from nine, but the league leaders always exercised their control in the match, with their custodian as safe as houses.

They gradually drew away from their opponents, as the game wore on, leaving no doubt as to what the outcome was going to be.

Sliema's defense couldn't be faulted, as they did their job, and limited their opponents to seven strikes, but their attack lacked cohesion, against a con-

fident opposing defense, with stray passes not helping the Sliema clan at all.

Kai Dowling was missing from the Sliema line up, and Jamie Gambin took Zach Sciberras' place, being utilised in the last session.

This opening match of the Championship Pool served Neptunes to open up a better advantage, at the top of the standings, but with champions, San Giljan, playing a game less.

The match was played at a slow tempo, with Neptunes content to stifle their adversaries.

Neptunes missed three man ups out of four, with a close range Jeremy Abela goal separating the two sides at the end of the opening session.

Sliema also missed their man ups, with Neptunes able to extend their advantage, with Jordan Camilleri and Cosmin Radu strikes, before Nicky Bugelli opened Sliema's account, late in the session. Neptunes held a slim and low, 3-1 lead at the interval.

After the break Sliema couldn't find their way to goal, missing more man ups, and Neptunes could ease further away, as Steve Camilleri got in among the scorers, with a brace, the second from a penalty.

The 5-1 score, at the start of



Photo: Domenic Aquilina

the last quarter virtually settled the match. Alex Attard shot home for Sliema, but Steve Camilleri obtained his hat trick.

His brother, Jordan, was then shown the red card, late in the match, with Christian Cluett finally scoring for Sliema, in the resulting man up.

Seconds from the end skipper, Niki Lanzon shot home the game's last goal, to seal Neptunes' victory.

Sliema: R. Coleiro, J. Gabarretta, E. Aquilina, C. Cluett 1, M. Meli, J. Soler, M. Fenech, T. Sullivan, J. Brownrigg, A. Attard 1, M. Cuk, N. Bugelli 1, Z.

Sciberras
Neptunes: A. Borg Cole, N. Lanzon 1, C. Radu 1, M. Cutajar, T. Agius, M. Lanzon, S. Camilleri 3, J. Camilleri 1, J. Abela 1, M. Zammit, B. Lanzon, M. Azzopardi, M. Castillo
Referees: A. DeRaffaele, F. Bragghini

Sirens enhance their top placing

Willie Vassallo

Exiles Jetfreight 7
Sirens Ritter Sport 10
(1-2, 2-3, 2-3, 2-2)

Sirens now enjoy a better advantage in the Relegation Pool, as they opened up the games with their third victory on the trot, against Exiles, who were not so distant from their opponents, as in the previous two defeats.

Sirens had to stay on their toes, as Exiles remained close for three sessions, before two quick strikes, in the last period, gave Sirens a good enough platform.

Still Exiles reduced their deficit once more, for a more than respectable score.

Sean Gravina returned from his one game suspension, for Exiles, but his brother's, Edward, place was taken by Luca Felice.

Sirens again had Matteo Muscat as their second custodian, in lieu of Joseph Cremona.

Exiles scored twice from their five man ups, with Sirens netting three times from seven.

John Napier gave Sirens their first advantage, with Julian Rizzo Naudi replying for Exiles. Before the end of the session Marc Grech restored Sirens' lead.



Photo: Domenic Aquilina

In the next period Sirens added on three more goals, but in between Exiles managed two strikes of their own. Gabriel Pace and a couple of goals for Sergi Mora for Sirens, and two more goals from Rizzo Naudi

for Exiles, had Sirens on a 5-3 advantage, at the interval.

After the break Napier increased Sirens' lead, but Exiles were back in real contention, as Andrea Bianchi and Milos Vukicevic had their side just a

goal behind.

Sergi Mora came to Sirens' rescue, netting twice more, the first one from a penalty, as Sirens went into the last quarter on an 8-5 advantage.

Two quick strikes, from man

ups, by Jacob Sciberras and Zach Mizzi, killed off the match.

Sean Gravina reduced Exiles' deficit, and then Exiles were awarded two penalties in succession, with Vukicevic seeing goalie, Nicky Grixti saving his first attempt, in the Sirens' goal, but then scoring from the next one. There wasn't much time left, with Sirens playing out the rest of the encounter.

Exiles: I. Bugeja, J. Rizzo Naudi 3, S. Vassallo, D. Pace Lupi, D. Borg Millo, L. Felice, S. Gravina 1, K. Grixti, N. Paris, A. Bianchi 1, G. Ciappara, M. Vukicevic 2, K. Lanzon

Sirens: N. Grixti, Z. Mizzi 1, S. Mora 4, G. Pace 1, M. Grech 1, I. Riolo, M. Balucci, D. Cutajar, J. Napier 2, J. Sciberras 1, L. Caruana, N. Farrugia, J. Cremona

Referees: P. Balzan, A. Magnessia

Standings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Neptunes	11	8	3	0	127	79	27
San Giljan	10	7	2	1	118	82	23
Sliema	11	5	3	3	98	93	18
Relegation Pool							
Sirens	11	4	2	5	100	98	14
Valletta	10	3	0	7	97	120	9
Exiles	11	0	0	11	90	158	0