

Westy seals soccer premiership

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YOU might not have heard last night, even though the victory chorus at Adamstown Oval was loud enough to carry all the way to the district in which the Tooheys Northern NSW Soccer Federation first division premiership will reside for the next 12 months.

So here it is officially: West Wallsend has won the title.

Westy sealed the premiership, its first since the formation of the NNSWSF in 1956, with a 2-1 win over a gallant Adamstown Rosebud side in last night's deferred fixture.

While the competition's grand final is still a month away, West Wallsend had a full dress rehearsal last night in claiming the trophy.

Despite advice both before the match and during the halftime break, the Westy players were always conscious of the scoreline and the price that would be paid for just one mistake, and as a result found themselves under pressure for a greater part of the night.

The anxiety was eased somewhat by two first-half goals, coming from midfielder Darrell Fenwick in the 32nd minute and from striker Glenn Cameron in the 43rd.

That advantage proved crucial since Adamstown scored its first



John McQuarrie

through the irrepressible John McQuarrie in the 51st minute and continued to harry the Westy defence, right up to the third minute of time added on for injury when a cross from defender George Rafty all but floated past the diving Craig Grills in Westy's goal.

He managed to tip the ball around the post to preserve Westy's lead, and a win that gave him his first premiership in nine years with the Bluebells.

That and other crises averted, the greatest of them a missed half volley from only two metres in the 29th minute from Adamstown's



Keith Harris

Ken Rutledge, West Wallsend finished with the result that bridged the one point leeway which stood between the team and the competition leader, defending premier Belmont Swansea, before the game.

What added volume to the West Wallsend victory song, and a number of its re-runs, was the voice of coach Keith Harris.

'It's the first time I've sung it this year,' he said, 'but there'll never be a better time.'

Harris paid tribute to a season's commitment from his players and could not speak too highly of Cameron, who finished the night

with a goal and a cut to his forehead.

The blond-headed striker lost his starting place during the first round and was relegated to reserves.

Had he stayed there he might have picked up his premiership winner's medal almost two hours earlier, when Westy's reserves won their match against Adamstown 4-1 in another title decider.

But he took his chance in the top grade earlier this month and came through with aplomb last night.

For Adamstown, the night ended all chance of the team figuring in the semi-finals of the competition and threw in a touch of *deja vu* for those players who had worn the club's colours last season.

The loss ends all chances of Adamstown pegging back the four-point difference between itself and fourth placed Austral United, even though the Rosebud team has a game to play against Cardiff on Saturday.

It was West Wallsend that knocked Adamstown out of last year's competition as well with a victory in the preliminary final.

But Adamstown coach Les Bee could have no complaints with the majority of his side, in particular McQuarrie, who was a source of inspiration with his non-stop running and determination.