

Martu Sports Online 30

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Bouncedown!

The 2019 Martu Youth Festival Report

Major Event for Future Stars of the Western Desert



The 2019 Martu Youth Festival was held in Punmu Community from April 15th – 17th. Six of the Western Desert communities were strongly represented - a fantastic result!

Hundreds of community members gathered together in anticipation at Punmu to enjoy the 2019 Martu Youth Festival from April 15th – 17th. Enthusiastic representation from six of the eight Western Desert communities added to the excitement of this major event celebrating Martu culture, sport and music, but the main attraction was the opportunity for promising Martu boys and girls to be identified for potentially life changing sport development opportunities.

Ngurra Kujungka, West Coast Eagles (WCE), Swan Districts Football Club (SDFC), WA Football Commission, Softball WA, Basketball WA, Desert Feet, PAMS and Fair Game all converged on Punmu for what was shaping up to be an exciting week.

The Festival is an annual celebration of Martu Sport, Music and Culture, and, importantly provides pathways for outstanding Martu sports men and women for 2019 and beyond. The 2019 Martu Youth Festival, and these unique opportunities, are only possible with the continued support of Newcrest Mining Limited, the Martu Charitable Trust and Healthway.



PUNMU BURN THE COMPETITION

The Punmu Bulldogs were a dominate force in last year's Festival at home and were looking to go back to back on their home deck.

With the temperature on day 1 reaching early 40s it was survival of the fittest. A young Punmu team came up against a much taller side in Parnngurr for the first game on Monday afternoon. Players did their best to dodge opposition players - as well as copious amounts of flies - throughout the game, however the young Punmu side saw them run away eventual winners 38-28.

Day 2 of competition saw the kids battle it out in a curtain raiser to the men's game. Over 16 boys and girls participated. With expert training from WCE and SDFC, they had plenty of fun whilst learning some new skills.

Punmu and Parnngurr competed again with additional player numbers bolstered by community members from Warralong, Parnpajinya and Nullagine. The game was another fantastic match of high quality. We can proudly report that a number of players were recognised by West Coast and Swan Districts for future programs. One of those players was Trisaan Robinson from Parnngurr who kicked an amazing goal from the boundary to guide his team to a narrow victory, 33-28.



Day 3 provided cooler weather which added a lot of excitement in community. The boys were keen to get games underway early and we saw a nail biting matchup between Kiwirrkurra and Punmu to start the day. Kiwirrkurra came out firing thanks to an unbelievable "speckie" from their captain Lindsay Ward who converted his goal. Punmu dug deep and turned the game around in the 2nd half to come away eventual winners 29-16 and progress straight through to the grand final. With a break due to the midday heat, the kids were back out there to display their skills.

The youngsters battled in out for 45 minutes in scorching conditions but were not fazed as they had

plenty of fun and gave the men a well-deserved breather before the semi-final.

The semi-final saw Kiwirrkurra and Parnngurr battle it out again. Kiwirrkurra were keen to erase an early loss and fought hard to claim a tight victory 35-27.

Parnngurr had been competitive in all their matches but just struggled to convert their chances. Kiwirrkurra came out firing early with captain Lindsay Ward dominating all over the ground and kicking 4 goals to progress his team through to the grand final against Punmu.

The Grand Final was a fantastic contest. Punmu and Kiwirrkurra traded goals early and kept the vocal crowd on the edge of their seats. Only 2 points separated the teams at half time. Punmu came out firing in the 2nd half, keeping Kiwirrkurra goalless. Punmu were the runaway winners 26-19.



Future All-Stars



This year due to the heat and the girls playing multiple softball matches, the girls' football game was changed to a one off all-star match.

The game was between Parnpajinya and Nullagine with members from the six communities making up numbers in each team.

The Nullagine girls were dominant throughout the match and came away with a three goal win.

Anna Aspro and Cheyenne Booth showed that they could match it with the boys after kicking some long-range goals.

Kiwirrkurra Lions Bite Back



The Softball Desert Cup was a battle between four teams: Punmu, Nullagine, Kiwirrkurra and Parnngurr.

With selection in the Newcrest Mining Ltd Western Desert Shield teams up for grabs (and bragging rights!), the standard of softball was high and competition fierce. Softball WA representative Mary Brown umpired the games throughout the week, coached the girls and selected the representatives for the Western Desert Shield trip.

Each team played 4 games throughout the week. An even competition saw each team win at least one game before heading into finals day on Wednesday. Kiwirrkurra showed their class moving past Nullagine to advance to the final while Punmu proved too strong for Parnngurr. A grand final rematch for 2018 was set. Kiwirrkurra, motivated by last years' defeat, came out of the blocks firing.

They set up what would prove to be an unreachable score to defeat Punmu 7-5, claiming the title as best softball community in the Western Desert.

Basketball

Hoop Dreams



Basketball WA ran a basketball skills clinic and competition for boys and girls under the age of 12. Punmu's outdoor court shade sale was damaged a few weeks before so wasn't providing any shade, but despite this setback the teams were committed and enjoyed their court time. Nullagine played Punmu in the grand final with Nullagine achieving a fantastic win.

Rock'n'Roll Punmu Style



Desert Feet have been a fantastic supporter of the Martu Youth Festival and this year was no different.

This year the Family Shoveller Band came up as a part of Desert Feet to the great excitement of the Martu audience.

The boys from Bidyadanga ran music workshops during the day for the kids and recording sessions with the community bands late afternoon. The kids and bands enjoyed learning off quality musicians who had also grown up in a remote community.

On the last night the Family Shoveller band rocked the night away with the all the kids and a couple of oldies up on the dance floor having a boogie.



Awards

After 3 days of competition the awards ceremony was held in the evening on the basketball court.

Ngurra Kujungka Chairman Bruce Booth and Vice Chairman Milton Chapman addressed the crowd, thanked them for their attendance and presented the much-coveted player awards.

It was a great way to finish off the festival so everybody could acknowledge the players and award winners before celebrating with the Family Shoveller band.

Men's Football

- Best Mark: Lindsay Ward - Kiwirrkurra.
- Best Goal: Trisaan Robinson - Punmu
- Best Player: Lindsay Ward - Kiwirrkurra

Women's Football

- Best Mark: Jerricah Malana - Punmu
- Best Goal: Cheyenne Booth - Nullagine
- Best Player: Terry Anne Aspro - Nullagine

Softball

- Best Catch: Ebony West - Kiwirrkurra
- Best Home Run: Shakira Biljabu - Punmu
- Best Player: Raylene Butt - Parngurr

Basketball

- Best Shot: Derran - Nullagine
- Most Points: Adam - Parnpajinya
- Best Player: Arnya - Punmu



The 2019 Martu Youth Festival and the resulting pathway opportunities for the most talented Martu players would not be possible without the continued support of Ngurra Kujungka's founding sponsor Newcrest Mining Ltd, together with major Festival sponsors the Martu Charitable Trust and Healthway.

Congratulations to every player for representing your community in the spirited competitions at this year's Festival.

Training continues for the 2020 Festival!



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