

Melville aim to salute in grand final debut

■ Bridget Lacy

Melville captain Tim Geers expects his side to play with freedom in today's historic maiden grand final appearance against Wesley South Perth at Perth Hockey Stadium.

The Melville Toyota League men's decider will see one of the teams claim a breakthrough premiership, with Wasps searching for their first flag since 2003 and Melville looking for victory at their first attempt.

Geers believes all the pressure will be on Wasps, who were runners-up last year.

"It's more excitement than pressure for us," he said.

"We've already exceeded any expectations this year of what anyone thought that we could do.

"We'll just go out and play with freedom. I don't think the occasion will get to us."

Melville captain **Tim Geers**

"We're going in as the underdogs and from my perspective all the pressure is on Wasps.

"We'll just go out and play with freedom. I don't think the occasion will get to us.

"It's just a matter of believing what we can achieve. We certainly believe we can achieve a win."

Wasps captain Rob Hammond is a former Kookaburras midfielder and was still in the national program when they last tasted premiership success.

He is wary of a Melville side that last weekend knocked out a University of WA team that

lost just one game in the regular season.

"I look forward to it," he said.

"It's terrific for the game that they're there. Melville are a really exciting young team, they've been playing really good hockey."

The women's grand final sees fierce rivals Curtin Trinity Pirates and UWA do battle yet again. The Pirates will be hoping to avenge last year's grand final loss, but UWA captain Holly White was quick to say her side had some unfinished business of its own.

"We'll also be looking to get revenge on them because they beat us quite convincingly in the semifinal last year," White said.

"Their game style is a lot different to ours. They play with a high striker and are an extremely fierce and tough side."

Curtin Trinity captain Kate Denning said they would go in with momentum having won two finals after finishing third in the regular season.

"This is our fifth grand final in a row," she said. "We like playing finals hockey and we love playing in grand finals."

"Last year it was a draw at full time and we lost on strokes, which is a horrible way to lose."

"Knocking UWA off last year was very satisfying and it would be even better to beat them in a grand final."



Photo available at westpix.com.au

The captains of the four teams that will compete in today's Melville Toyota League grand finals at the Perth Hockey Stadium are Holly White (UWA), left, Kate Denning (Curtin Trinity Pirates), Rob Hammond (Wesley South Perth) and Tim Geers (Melville). Picture: Nic Ellis