

DAY CORNERS THE MARKET

Conceding a penalty against Melville City is a dangerous prospect for any team in the All Flags Premier League this year.

That's because of the deadly form of James Day, whose dream of playing for the Kookaburras is within reach.

The 26-year-old has scored 15 of his team's 29 goals, nine more than any other player, to lead Melville City to an undefeated start to the season.

Even more remarkable is all 15 goals from the full-back have come from penalty corners, including five in his team's 12-0 drubbing of Curtin University at Pulse Stadium in Kardinya last Saturday.

"This year it seems to be all working and they're going in," Day said.

"I've been doing that (penalty corners) for a few years now. I picked it up a bit late, but it's something I've worked at from about under-21s through to now.

"It's a bit of placement, but for me once I get my confidence up ... the power and speed come from that."

Day has sacrificed a lot to try to make his Kookaburras dream come true, having moved across from

Canberra three years ago to try to earn higher honours.

"The competition here is a lot better than the Canberra competition and having the national program here as well, playing against the best in the country, does help," he said.

"Hopefully the goal scoring can help towards that (Kookaburras selection)."

Day is working towards delivering Melville City their first State title. They are half a win clear on top of the table with a goal difference of 25.

This weekend they play Hale, who are fourth and coming off a 2-0 win over Whitford.

"Even though we've had that one weekend of lockdown, we've come back firing after missing the finals last year," Day said.

"I'm looking forward to it (Hale). They'll be a good challenge. They're always close games, played in good spirit but very competitive.

"We lost to them in a final a couple of years ago in a shootout, but beat them last year, and hopefully we can do that again and get the points on the weekend.

"We're all keen to dig in and see if we can win the club's first premiership."

Melville's James Day is the form player of WA Hockey.



GLOVE SAVES MELVILLE'S DAY



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Melville's James Day has been cleared of a broken hand.

Picture: Janine Tate

A protective glove has helped save Melville's season after scoring machine James Day was cleared of a broken hand following an incident in the third quarter of their 11-0 win over Old Guildfordians Mundaring last week.

There were fears Day had sustained serious damage to his gloved left hand after he was hit by a hard stick shot, but scans cleared him of any bone damage, with bruising, a cut and a damaged glove being the damage.

It's good news for the top-of-the-table Melville because Day is their most dangerous player. Day leads the All Flags Premier

League men's scoring with a whopping 29 goals in 15 matches, 16 more than the next best in the competition.

Remarkably, all 29 goals have come from penalty corners, with his excellent drag-flicking skills giving him the most potent weapon in WA hockey.

"We care for the person more than just a player, so from a personal front and also for our season ahead we're very fortunate he's able to continue," coach Craig Wilson said.

"He'd already flicked two in for that game and would've scored a few more if he'd been able to stay on.

"James has been scoring well, but also playing good hockey back with defensive work, which has gone up another level, and his penetrating passing is setting up our forward play."

Melville play bottom team Curtin University at Perth Hockey Stadium on Saturday, a team they drubbed 12-0 earlier this season, with Day putting five in the back of the net.

Wilson said although his side was in good form, they wanted to make sure they retained their momentum heading into the pointy end of the season as the race for the premiership heats up.

"We want to keep working on things in our game that will hold us in good stead come September," he said.

"Every game and every moment is an opportunity to improve. We never neglect an opportunity to improve.

"We know the competition is going to spice up in the back end with some non-selected Olympic players in the competition and some returning after Tokyo.

"So we know the competition is going to get red hot. You don't get many seasons where you've won 13 of 15 games."

■ Last week's image was taken by Craig Stewart.