‘Bittersweet’ result for revamped Cats

It was a “bittersweet” start to the AFLW season for Geelong, with the Cats falling to North Melbourne by eight points on Saturday.

In new coach Dan Lowther’s first game in charge, the Cats battled back from a slow start to take the lead in the third quarter against the much-fancied Kangaroos, but couldn’t hold on as North Melbourne kicked two last quarter goals to give the Cats a 4.2 (26) to 3.6 (18) defeat.

However there were positive signs for the Cats, who welcomed eight new players for their first game in the hoops, considering they had lost by 10 goals the last time the two teams met in round one 2020.

“We came here to win,” Lowther said after the loss.

“To be in a winnable position at three quarter time and let it slip is disappointing, but there were some really positive signs.

“It’s pleasing to have so much change occur in a short time period and be able to be consistent as a group.

“We focused a lot over the last five months on playing a certain way and the expectation is our players play that way and style.

“After half time we kind of found our groove and played that way.

“The Kangaroos’ defensive game is quite strong, so we made a few adjustments after half-time, which kind of equalised that for us.”

The Cats won just the one game last year, with scoring being the major issue for the side in 2020 and Lowther said he had seen improvement already.

The Cats had eight shots on goal, and with better accuracy, could have claimed a win.

“We had some opportunities to score, which we didn’t get last year,” Lowther said.

“So, to have some shots on goal today that were gettable, and not to take them, is a little bit disappointing.

“But, still, better signs.

The Cats welcomed eight new players for their first game in the hoops in the eight-point loss to North Melbourne. (Geelong Cats) 264172_01

“It’s really pleasing [that] we’ve come a long way in a short time.

“We just need to make sure we’re consistent across four quarters and I thought after half time we showed that consistency.”

Number two draft pick Georgie Prespakis was a standout in her first game for the Cats, collecting a team-high 20 disposals and seven clearances, while vice captain Nina Morrison – a former number one pick – played her first game in almost two years.

She finished with 14 touches and five tackles in what Lowther said was a good return.

“To her smiling after the game, pre-game and during the game is good for her,” he said.

Geelong look to have escaped the game unscathed despite recruit Chloe Scheer suffering a head knock in a collision with teammate Claudia Gunjaca and captain Meg McDonald leaving the ground late with a leg issue.

Both are expected to be fit when the Cats host the Western Bulldogs at GMHBA Stadium on tomorrow night.

Ash Bolt

Prespakis earns her star

Geelong midfielder Georgie Prespakis’ seamless transition to the AFLW has been recognised with a NAB Rising Star Award nomination.

The 18-year-old made her AFLW debut in the Cats’ eight-point loss to North Melbourne on Saturday and was the standout in Geelong’s midfield.

She showed her skills from the first bounce, collecting the first clearance of the game, and finished with 20 disposals, an equal-game-high seven clearances, six tackles, five inside 50s and two score involvements. Her kicking was important for Geelong, collecting 402 metres gained – the most of any Cat.

Cats AFLW coach Dan Lowther said he was impressed with Prespakis’ performance, highlighting she led the team in disposals, contested possessions and clearances.

“To have Georgie Prespakis come out and play the way she did just shows she’s ready for AFLW football,” he said.

North Melbourne’s Mia King was the other rising star nomination.

Prespakis’ nomination means she has the chance to follow in the footsteps of her older sister and Carlton star Madison, who won the rising star award in 2019 before claiming the AFLW best and fairest a year later.

Prespakis is the favourite to take out the award, with 10 of the competition’s 14 captains nominating her as the likely rising star winner ahead of the season.

Ash Bolt

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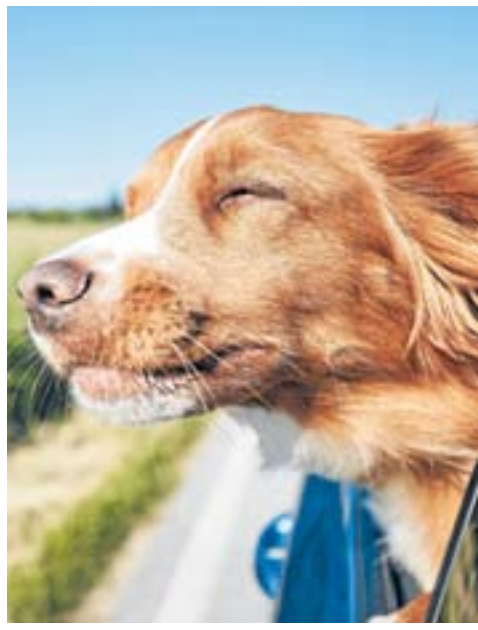
Prep for driving with your pets

Drivers going on a long trip usually prepare themselves by having water and snacks on board, with some music or a podcast to pass the time. However, if pets are travelling along, they also need to be ready for the journey.

If you have ever had a pet in the car, they may have been experiencing problems with travelling, but haven’t been able to tell you. The top things to consider when travelling with pets in the car are:

- Fear of travelling: For pets with a fear of riding in the car (even only on trips to the vet) take them on regular, short journeys to get them used to the experience.
- Motion sickness: Medication can be bought from the vet to prevent motion sickness. It can also be avoided by feeding your pet upon arriving at the destination rather than before. Where possible, try having your animal sit safely in the front seat to avoid nausea.
- Pet comfort: Keeping the car at a comfortable temperature is important when considering animals. A common sight is dogs with their heads all the way out of the window to cool down. Instead, have the window down enough for fresh air but not for their heads to poke out too far.
- Pet safety: Restraining your four-legged friend is also important to keep them safe and stop them moving around too much and potentially distracting drivers. Safety harnesses, travel kennels and pet barriers all help keep them injury-free.
- Frequent pit stops: Pulling over regularly will prevent pets from becoming restless or having accidents. When stopping to exercise your pet, ensure you clip on their leash and give them a drink of water – make sure you bring some waste bags in case your dog needs to go to the bathroom.



Your pups may have trouble travelling in the car but can’t tell you – keep them happy with these tips. (iStock)

Leaving your pet alone in the car is a no-no. Even for a short period or with windows down, the rising temperature can cause heat stroke. Keeping a pet first-aid kit in your car when you are travelling with your dog will be helpful in the case of any mishaps on your travels or your trip.

Visit the RSPCA website or contact your local vet for more information.