



Cockatoos Retain Maher Ross Cup

The GrainCorp NSW Country Cockatoos have retained the Maher Ross Cup with a three tries to one 20 – 10 victory over NSW Subbies at Terrigal.

As has been the case in previous encounters the match was an arm wrestle from the kick off until the full time whistle, and the healthy crowd at The Haven Oval were treated to some entertaining Rugby.

Subbies had first use of a steady north easterly breeze in the first half, but it was the Cockatoos who had the better of the play in the opening ten minutes, and they should have taken an early lead, but a short ranged penalty kick was wide of the mark.

Subbies defence held and the first time they ventured into the Cockatoos half they were rewarded when five eight Dan Kelly kicked a thirty metre penalty goal to take a 3 - 0 lead following a Cockatoos' infringement at the breakdown.

Subbies maintained the pressure and had the opportunity to go further ahead when the Cockatoos were again penalised, but the easy kick was waved away and the score remained unchanged.

Subbies picked up the pace and went on the attack, which saw the Cockatoos having to scramble in defence close to their line on several occasions. The big Subbies pack was starting to get a roll on, which enabled their backs to mount sweeping raids. One of these should have resulted in a try when the inclusion of an extra man created an overlap, but the final pass went to ground with the try line wide open.

The Cockatoos defence continued to hold, with a highlight being the fierce contest for the ball at the breakdown. A turnover was eventually achieved resulting in Man of the Match and flanker Josh Stewart making a fifty metre bust, which was carried on by a series of pick and drives before centre Filisone Pauta powered over for an unconverted try for the Cockatoos to take the lead 5 - 3.

Play for the next fifteen minutes was centred between the twenty twos with both sides testing each other out, but Subbies were the ones who eventually broke the deadlock. A line out win saw a driving maul scatter the Cockatoos forwards and back-rower Jake Wainwright came up with a try. The conversion from the sideline by Dan Kelly saw Subbies take a 10 – 5 lead, and it looked as if the momentum of the match had swung Subbies way.

This remained the score line until half time, and Subbies would have been disappointed they weren't further ahead given the missed scoring opportunities and the use of the breeze.

The second half was only four minutes old and the Cockatoos came right back into the match. A line out win saw their forwards drive deep into the Subbies twenty two, before the ball was put through the hands and winger Scott Burgess sidestepped his way to score in the corner to lock up the score at 10 all. The sideline conversion looked to be on target before the breeze took hold of it and it was waved away.

Subbies had an opportunity to take the lead five minutes later, but the close range penalty attempt missed which was a let off for the Cockatoos.

The arm wrestle continued for the next fifteen minutes which was highlighted by tough defence and aggressive play, which eventually resulted in a player from each team being sent to the sin bin.

Midway through the half the Cockatoos took control of the match when a crashing tackle jolted the ball free which centre Lee Russell gathered and powered through several tackles to score next to the goal posts. The successful conversion by Scott Burgess saw the Cockatoos skip away to a 17 – 10 lead and they were on a roll.

Subbies had an opportunity to close the gap five minutes later, but the penalty kick was a shocker which sliced into the Cockatoos' in goal and it was hurriedly kicked into touch.

The kicking horrors for Subbies continued when they again missed an easy penalty attempt two minutes later, which again enabled the Cockatoos to clear the ball from their danger zone. With the clock winding down both teams cleared their benches and the intensity of the match increased, but neither side were able to make any try scoring opportunities.

Just when it looked as if the scoring was complete, the Cockatoos were awarded a penalty right on the sideline thirty metres out. Scott Burgess hit the kick sweetly but it looked as if it was going to be held up in the wind, but it hit the cross bar and bounced over to make the final score 20 – 10.

Vision of the match and the Country Championship finals day is available by accessing the Country webpage www.nswcountryrugby.com.au and clicking on http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UB_6vTtyiA&feature=share

GrainCorp NSW Country Cockatoos – 20

Scott Burgess, Filisoni Pauta & Lee Russell Tries
Scott Burgess Penalty Goal & Conversion

Defeated

NSW Suburban Rugby Union – 10

Jake Wainwright Try
Dan Kelly Penalty Goal & Conversion

Cockatoos Team

1 – Amoni Veia (Parkes), 2 – Peter Nau (Dubbo Roos), 3 – James Smith (Shoalhaven), 4 – Lachie McCutcheon (Narromine), 5 – Dan Ryan (Parkes), 6 – Paul Tuala (Wollongong Uni), 7 – Josh Stewart (Tamworth Pirates), 8 – Gavin Holder (Camden), 9 – Adam McCormack (Hastings Valley), 10 – Ben Greentree (Camden), 11 – Scott Burgess (Dubbo Roos), 12 – Lee Russell (Camden), 13 – Filisoni Pauta (Dubbo Roos), 14 – Andre Itula (Avondale), 15 – Donovan Nepia (Wollongong Uni), 16 – Steve Lamont (Hamilton), 17 – Ryan Jackson (Scone), 18 – Mitch Hardy (Shoalhaven), 19 – Joe Taylor (Terrigal), 20 – Auvasa Falealli (Hamilton), 21 – Andrew Barrett (Wollongong Vikings), 22 – Eli Sinoti (Avondale), 23 – Chris Plunkett (Bathurst).

NSW Subbies Team

1 – Josh Manson (Balmain), 2 – Tim Moule (Kings Old Boys), 3 – Joe Lynch (Brothers), 4 – Tipoma Kaveinga (Balmain), 5 – Ryan Wilson (Balmain), 6 – James King (St Patricks), 7 – Jake Wainwright (Balmain), 8 – Seva Rokabaro (St Patricks), 9 – Sam Hall (Balmain), 10 – Daniel Kelly (Colleagues), 11 – Ben Borg (Brothers), 12 – Damien Fakafanua (St Patricks), 13 – Finau MakaMaka (Balmain), 14 – Petro Satago (St Patricks), 15 – Cronan Healy (Drummoyne), 16 – Callum Black (Hunters Hill), 17 – Brad Tyher (Balmain), 18 – James Webb (Balmain), 19 – Tom Evens (Petersham), 20 – Simon Meiklejohn (Mosman), 21 – Brook Tremayne (Balmain), 22 – Alex Cheng (Colleagues), 23 – Gareth Smith (Epping).

ENDS