

Moree refuse to take foot off pedal

MOREE 167 QUIRINDI 0
PIRATES 60 INVERELL 36
WALCHA 39 BARRABA 21

MOREE took out its frustrations, after suffering its first loss, on Quirindi on Saturday blitzing the Lions 167-nil.

It was a round for big scores with Pirates winning a 15-try affair at Inverell 60-36.

Jake Douglas and Ben Goodman both crossed twice for Pirates while Amanaki Pakalani and Siaki Maea scored doubles for the home side.

At Walcha, Walcha won the battle of the Rams with a 39-21 win over their Barraba counterparts.

The home side set the win up in the first half going into the break 22-nil up.

Breakaways Will Fletcher and Fred Kei were in the thick

of the try scoring with Fletcher crossing for a double, and Kei scoring a try and kicking a conversion in his final game for the Rams.

Up at Moree the Bulls were well-up at half-time and it only got worse for the Lions.

"We did talk about playing for 80 minutes and we did that," Bulls coach Damien Kelly said.

"That was why we scored so many tries. We kept trying."

That was the thing that he was most pleased about.

It would have been easy to take their foot off the peddle, but they didn't.

They ran in 25 tries with winger Jordon Cosh collecting five.

They really caused the Lions a lot of problems on the edges with fellow winger Sam Bagicalupo also crossing for three,

as did half-back Andrew Pauli and prop John Adams.

Heath Riggs had a good day with the boot and finished with a personal haul of 45 points from a try and 20 conversions.

Kelly said the Lions never gave up and praised them for bringing up almost two sides.

Last year they didn't even make the trip.

"They hung in," he said.

Prop Marciu Latabua was "everywhere" for the Bulls and picked up the three points. Adams got the two and Ben Carrigan the one.

□ Meanwhile NSW Country retained the Maher-Ross Cup after beating Sydney Suburban 20-10 at Terrigal on Saturday. Scone's Ryan Jackson and Pirates Josh Stewart played for the Cockatoos with Stewart being named players' player.

NARRABRI 38 TAMWORTH 17

NARRABRI made it two from two for its visits to Tamworth this season on Saturday but found it more of a battle than form suggested or even the half-time score.

Tamworth really took it to its more-fancied rivals in the second 40 and won the half, but the Blue Boars had done the damage by then and held on to win 38-17.

They showed their attacking brilliance in the first half and raced away to a 31-nil half-time lead.

That became 38-nil only a couple of minutes into the second half, but they failed to score another point as the Magpies rallied.

The home side enjoyed a lot more of the ball and a lot more of the territory and turned that into points.

"I thought we played 50 minutes of football," Blue Boars co-coach Hunter Harley said.

"The other 30 we'll just forget about."

The signs were ominous for the Magpies when the Blue Boars got the ball back from the kick-off and after rumbling it through the forwards for a few phases second rower Sam Clements dove over.

The score quickly blew out, with a Michael Cain penalty and quick tries to Matt Nott and Tim O'Brien putting the Blue Boars up 24-nil midway through the half.

O'Brien's try summed up a lot of what was good about what the Blue Boars did in the first half - crisp passing, good support play and the forwards and backs working well.

From a lineout on their 22, after Tamworth had kicked out on the full, five-eighth Henri

Red Devils' pack a winning weapon

GUNNEDAH 57 SCORE 7

GUNNEDAH hammered Scone in the scrums and on the scoreboard at Gunnedah on Saturday to almost assure themselves a spot in the top tier.

The 57-7 win sees the Red Devils jump ahead of the Brumbies and tighten their grip on the top five.

"It gives us that two-game buffer," Red Devils co-coach Tim Walsh said.

And takes the pressure off for their trip to Inverell in the last round, provided they can win at least one of their next two.

The way they've been playing of late it's hard to see them not, although even Walsh was surprised by the strength of Saturday's performance.

They set the tone up front with the scrum dominant.

"Scone never won a scrum. We pushed them off every one," Walsh said.

He said they've been working hard on their scrum and with the injection of a bit of size it is becoming a real weapon for them.

The signs weren't that good early with the Brumbies scoring within the first minute after the Red Devils muffed the kick-off.

But they negated that a couple of minutes later, and got on a bit of a roll.

"We got to 28-7 pretty quickly," Walsh said.

"Not much happened the 10 either side of half-time."

"(But) We got our heads back on and started going forward before we went wide and the points came."

They pretty much starved the Brumbies of

possession. "Once we got into our patterns they didn't get much ball," Walsh said.

The backs were again hard to contain led by fullback James Perrett.

He bagged a double as did number eight Joe Gardiner.

Gardiner also picked up the three points. Cameron Kesby got the two with Keegan Loughrey and Scott Mitchell sharing the one.

Brumbies co-coach Ben McRae rejected the claim they didn't win a scrum but said they struggled.

Struggled pretty much sums up the day for them.

"We didn't turn up," McRae said.

Scone Cup weekend always causes a few headaches and by game start they were missing half of their regular first grade side with a couple of pull-outs on Saturday morning.

"It was very disappointing," he said

He thought they would find it tough but thought they would have played better than they did.

That's not to take anything away from Gunnedah.

"Gunnedah played very well. They were really good," McRae said.

As well as the scrum, discipline was also an issue.

"The penalty count was against us," McRae said.

"That's something we've still got to work on."

The loss leaves them with a lot of work to do to make the five.

Lourens Le Grange was outstanding at breakaway and their best followed by skipper Martin Feehan and centre Dale Robinson.

Knight found second rower Henry Curtin, who ran onto it at pace and made good ground.

The Magpies defence got to him but he was able to get the offload away and in trying to hold the Blue Boars out they infringed.

The Blue Boars turned down the points for a scrum, from which half-back Matt Schwager drew the defence and then popped the ball back inside to O'Brien.

Tom Lynch then secured them the four-try bonus point a few minutes before the break and when Luke Findley crossed early in the second it looked like a big score was looming.

But the Magpies were eventually able to build a bit of pressure and some phases and scored through winger Pat Strong.

That seemed to lift the Magpies even more and they crossed another two times to take the second half honours.

Harley thought the second half was a combination of them playing poorly and the Magpies improving.

He didn't have a lot of complaint about their first half.

"We really stuck to our structure at the start," he said.

The backs particularly looked sharp.

They had worked on playing a bit deeper and it paid dividends.

"The ball was beating the man a lot of times," Harley said.

"The forwards kept it tight and then when we'd sucked them in we put it through the hands."

It was for the Magpies a bit of a mini victory winning the second half, but sadly an all too familiar story.