

## **North Harbour Club Premier and Under 21 Finals – 21 July**

North Harbour Stadium was alive on Saturday with 4500 passionate supporters enthralled by three great finals for 2018 in the Premier 1, Premier 2 and Under 21 grades. Northcote came from behind in the Premier 1 final to take it out 25-20 over East Coast Bays and in similar circumstances on the Oval for the Premier 2 final, Northcote came back to edge East Coast Bays 18-16. In the Under 21 (Colts), East Coast Bays led all the way to win 20-12 over Marist. All three winners backed up their results of 2017 to take the silverware in 2018.

The Premier 1 was officiated by Jonathon Paterson in his 100<sup>th</sup> Premier 1 fixture in 15 years as a community rugby referee – congratulations JP on an outstanding achievement. An early exchange of penalties to first-fives Jack Heighton and Jack Bergin saw the lead shared 3 all. East Coast Bays then stormed in with two quick tries to winger Juda Moala-Liava'a and ever-green second-five Tua Saseve with Saseve adding the extras which saw the green and blacks take the lead 17-6 with Northcote pivot Jack Bergin securing another penalty in the meantime. In reply Northcote winger Peter Hurst burst down the flank to score an unconverted try to take the score to 17-11 at halftime to Bays. In the second half another successful penalty attempt to Heighton took Bays to their final points for the day and Northcote started to crank it up. In the final quarter their fortunes changed with No. 8 Murphy Taramai borrowing over the line with a Bergin conversion giving a one point lead 18-17. With 5 minutes to go, recent Centurion Blake Hall finished it off with a well-deserved try. Replacement first-five Ben Searle rounded out the score to 25-20 for Northcote to lift the ASB Cup.

In the Premier 2 Grade top seed East Coast Bays led all the way through to the last 10 minutes with a try to Lock Samu Vaihu, conversion and penalty by first-five Dylan Ferreira countered by a penalty from Northcote fullback Martin Watson for a half-time score of 10-3 to Bays. Ferreira kicked two more penalties in the second half to look like a victory being on the cards for Bays but Northcote found the resolve to put on the pressure and two tries to flying centre Penetana Smith plus a penalty and conversion from Watson provided an exciting finish with the Stuart Cup going to Northcote 18-16.

In the Under 21 final a try to East Coast Bays Lock Callum Budge and penalty by No.10 Jack May provided a lead over top seed Marist in the first quarter. Winger Jesse Hendry scored for Marist after sustained pressure down the right flank after 25 minutes. With a half-time score of 8-5 to 2017 champion Bays, the sides battled away in the second half but East Coast Bays prop James Roots went over to take the score to 13-5 and mid-way through the game May cut through several layers of defence to score then convert to increase the lead to 20-5. In the 75<sup>th</sup> minute, from 15 metres out, Marist first-five Toby Snelgrove goes in under the posts and converted for a final score of 20-12 to East Coast Bays to lift the Wynyard Cup in back to back seasons.

East Coast Bays must be congratulated for their presence in all three Finals and the Colts win, but Northcote had the final say in both Premier finals with gutsy come from behind finishes and Marist gave their all in a great Under 21 final to fly the Doolan flag in the Stadium for the first time in many years.

The Plate finals were all hosted at Takapuna RFC, and in a high scoring encounter Takapuna held out Kumeu 40-37 for the Premier 1 Plate, Kumeu were too good for Marist 33-8 in the Premier 2 Plate

and Silverdale secured their first silverware for the season defeating Takapuna comfortably 33-12 to reverse the round-robin results.

The Under 85 Kg grade continued their second round fixtures with Takapuna putting away Mahurangi 28-17 at home to retain joint lead on 54 points with Silverdale who were too good for Helensville at home 27-7. Kumeu had a bonus point win of 36-20 over Bays at Mairangi Bay to jump back into 4<sup>th</sup> place for championship semi-final contention. Massey edged North Shore 20-19 at Devonport to consolidate third place and Northcote had the bye. The U85's have two more rounds of games with Semi-Finals 11 August and Finals 18 August.

Eden beat East Coast Bays women 15-10 away and College Rifles put away Glenfield on Friday night under lights 48-27 in a high-scoring encounter to complete their round-robin fixtures. Our teams finished outside the top four of the wider Auckland Womens Premier grade and didn't qualify for the semi-finals 29 July.

The Presidents grade had a week off for the Premier Finals and resumes the fray on 29 July clattering on towards finals day 18 August at Kumeu.



**Northcote Premier 1**



Northcote Premier 2



East Coast Bays U21



Centurion Referee Jonathon Paterson