



BEARS ONE WIN FROM GRAND FINAL

12 September 2009

The North Sydney Bears are just one win from grand final action following the first weekend of NSW Cup semi finals.

The Grizzlies scored 27 unanswered points in the second half, blowing away Cronulla 35-8 at North Sydney Oval and earning themselves a week's break.

However the early skirmishes played in front of 2,013 fans, were shared equally with solid defence and skittish kicking the order of the day.

Around the quarter hour, young Bear's playmaker Justin Hunt exploited a defensive chink, slicing through for a 4-pointer. Hunt converted to give the Bears a 6 nil lead.

Soon after, the game erupted with former Bear forward Ryan Verlinden featuring prominently.

The heat and the fisticuffs galvanised the Sharks, who enjoyed a glut of possession for the next 15 minutes.

Cronulla were directed capably by half back Chad Townsend, whose perfectly weighted kick created a four-pointer for centre Daniel Raucava.

The Sharks failed to convert but earned a bonus when the Bears kicked the restart dead.

A fired up Verlinden was denied a try after a bumping charge, but weight of possession told with Shark's full back Ben Orcher crossing the stripe.

The game settled into an arm wrestle, with the Sharks probing, however the Bears refused to fold.

Another flare up saw Verlinden and Bears hooker Beau Falloon marched for ten minutes.

The Sharks were judged the aggressor and Hunt coolly converted the penalty locking the teams at 8 apiece at half time.

After the break, Cronulla continued to pressure the Bear's line, however wingers Curtis Johnson and Reece Robinson defused the Shark's tricks.

At the 52nd minute, the Bears upped the ante, with young halfback Jarryd Hogan threading a kick into the Cronulla in-goal for Hunt to pinch a second try.

The Sharks were in more trouble when North's captain courageous Chris Trembath bashed his way across the line for a 20 to 8 lead.

Bravely, Cronulla tried to fight back, with Penrith bound winger David Simmons prominent, and the Bears were forced to defend stoutly.

The Red & Blacks failed to bend and star fullback Samu Wara and hooker Falloon combined to push the Bears within range of the Shark's line.

The excellent field position enabled Hogan to coolly pot a 1 pointer.

Still the Sharks counter punched and after an exciting 40 metre surge, Robinson returned favour with a pinballing run that bumped the winger past six Cronulla defenders.

After more sustained attack, North's second rower David Tyrell crashed over between the posts at the 75th minute mark to give the Bears an assailable 29 to 8 lead after the conversion.

On the bell, the slashing Hogan rolled a deftly weighted kick off the Cronulla goal posts for the busy Robinson to touch down to seal the 35-8 result.

North Sydney Bear's CEO Greg Florimo was ecstatic with the win, but remains cautiously optimistic about the Bear's title chances.

"In terms of form, health and fitness and considering the amount of possession the Sharks had in the first half, it was a really great result," said Florimo who nominated Hogan, Hunt and winger Curtis Johnson for special mention.

"However we're not getting ahead of ourselves as there are some good teams still in the competition. In the week off, we'll be working hard to keep our feet on the ground and not get lost in the enormity of what we could do."

New Central Coast Bears Head Coach David Fairleigh at Bear Park to monitor the talent was equally impressed.

"Every time Cronulla ventured into the Bear's quarter, Norths denied them," said Fairleigh, who nominated full back Wara and centre Bladen Baird for special mention.

"When Norths had the ball they had no trouble getting it back to the other end of the field. It was a matter of wearing Cronulla down. The team changed the angles well and that got them through the middle. It was an excellent result."

North Sydney Bears 35 (Justin Hunt (2), Chris Trembath, David Tyrell and Reece Robinson tries, Hunt 5 goals and 2 penalty goals, Jarryd Hogan 1 field goal) defeated Cronulla 8 (Daniel Rauicava and Ben Orcher tries) Halftime 8 all.

PICTURED: SOLID SUPPORTER BASE - A scrum is set in front of the Hill at NSO. Photo: Steve Little.

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STAND ASIDE

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