

UNDER 85S V WAIKATO 25 AUGUST 2018:

Turnovers win matches, or in this case lose matches.

North Harbour dominated most of the statistics in their first game of the rep season, playing Waikato at home at Harvey Wright. But the two that counted most, they lost. Turnovers and points scored.

The game was only 90 seconds old when centre Alex Samuals burst through 25 metres out to go over under the posts for a easy conversion by Cameron Dalzell. 7 – 0

Playing with the aid of a strong wind Harbour needed to keep the points coming but turnovers when in promising positions were hurting them and it was not until the 18th minute mark that Cameron Dalzell extended the lead with a 30 metre penalty. 10 - 0

The lineouts were being owned by Harbour with Blair Abernathy, Luke Spratt and Kapi Lolohea winning all the ball (seven against the throw in the first half) but turnovers continued to be a problem. After 29 minutes this really hurt them when the ball was turned over inside the Waikato 22 and they raced 70 metres to score a converted try. 10 – 7.

Waikato had their tails up and were making the most of the scraps of possession they were getting. They were next to score when a defensive error saw them score in the corner right on halftime. 10 - 12

The second half brought much of the same with Harbour their own worst enemy with loose carries and errors costing them possession. It was no surprise when Waikato scored, again following a turnover. The successful conversion took the score to 17 – 10 to Waikato after 53 minutes.

There was more urgency about Harbour's play from the kickoff and they started to win turnovers themselves and put more pressure on the Waikato defense but it was not until the 74th minute that Isaac Leumoana crossed after a good build up. The conversion from wide out into the wind missed but the gap had closed to 15 – 17.

From the kickoff Harbour worked their way into the Waikato half and earned a penalty 40 metres out on the angle. Dougie Patterson gave it his all into the wind but the ball drifted a metre wide.

One last attack to try and steal the game with strong runs from David Sula, Ken Tupuola and Chris Holmes taking play deep into the Waikato half. The ball was taken to the left but desperate cover from Waikato took the ball into touch and the game was over.

Not the first up result Harbour was after. Two training runs together was not enough to get the combinations going and a lot of work required in the week ahead. Play with a desire for 80 minutes and eliminate the unforced errors and turnovers will be the aim next week.

Player of the day went to Josh Meyer who was dynamic in the loose with some powerful carries and tackles