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Country Championships wrap up – Day 2: Field 1 – The FINALS

WOMENS 7's – Cup Semi-Finals

Semi-Final #1 - Central West vs Mid-North Coast

Central West were undefeated yesterday in the pool matches but nobody must have told Mid-North Coast that as they streaked out to a 15 – 0 half time lead.

This spurred the Central West Women into action dominating possession and territory for the first 6 minutes of the second half and they pulled the score back to 15 – 10 with just over a minute remaining in the game. Mid-North Coast put the game to bed scoring as the siren sounded.

Full Time result: Mid-North Coast 22 – 10 Central West

Semi-Final #2 - Hunter Women vs Central North

The second Women's Semi-Final started in a similar fashion with the underdog Central North having all the possession in the opening exchanges which led to the opening try. The strong favourites Hunter Women started to get some more of the ball and posted 2 late tries before the half to take the lead 12 – 5 at half time.

Some great play from both teams and an arm wrestle was broken by Hunter who scored with a couple of minutes remaining to put the Central North comeback just out of reach and the winners of Pool B yesterday made their way into the Women's 7's Final later this afternoon.

Full time result: Hunter Women 17 – 5 Central North

Richardson Shield Final – Central Coast vs Western Plains

The local support was again on show for the hosts with another tremendous roll up of supporters to watch their local blokes take on the Central Coast.

The size and ball carrying skills of the Central Coast forwards was certainly evident in the early exchanges which led to their first try. The second try followed shortly with a fantastic run by Central Coast scrum half Matt King. Both tries were converted to take the Coasties to 14 – 0 over the hosts Western Plains.

The Hosts were desperately trying to find their groove from yesterday's performance but continued to make some errors. Central Coast capitalised on these errors scoring another converted try but not before some staunch Western Plains defence held the ball up twice over the line.

There would be more points before the break from the rampant Central Coast team with another two tries the last of which was as the half time siren sounded.

The score at half time Central Coast 33 – 0 Western Plains.

The second half started with Western Plains looking like a different team, spurred on by their home crowd they dominated the first 20 min of the second half and posted their first try of the game which brought the crowd to the life. The Western Plains team started to show the flashes of brilliance they displayed on the Saturday and they ran in their second try but missed the ensuing conversion. This brought the score back to 33 – 12 with 16 min remaining. The host's comeback was stifled with Central Coast running in the next two tries taking the score to 47 – 12. Western Plains did not give up, pounding the Central Coast line for the remainder of the game to score the final try.

Congratulations to Rowlands Colts Cup champions for 2018, Newcastle Hunter Rugby Union.

Congratulations to Jarryd Logan from Newcastle Hunter who was the Match Official for the final.

Richardson Shield Final result: Central Coast 47 – 19 Western Plains

Rowlands Colts Cup Final – Newcastle Hunter vs Central West

A strong start from both teams but consecutive penalties brought the Central West colts within kicking distance but the shot at penalty goal went wide. The game was starting to be played more down in the Central West half with the NHRU kicking game pinning the Central West colts deep in their half. NHRU had a penalty shot miss wide but they continued to pressure the Central West try line and finally breaking the nil all deadlock after 24 min of good rugby. NHRU 7 – 0 Central West.

More possession and penalties kept the NHRU colts hot on the attack posting their second try in quick succession and the easy conversion was made taking the score to 14 – 0.

Central West showed a lot of resilience in getting back into the contest scoring the next try but missing the conversion to take the score to 14 – 5.

NHRU took the wind out of the first half revival of Central West by scoring on the bell to extend their by 19 – 5 at half time.

NHRU continued to dominate the first 20 minutes of the second half running in 3 tries to push out the lead to 36 – 5. Central West kept fighting all the way to the full time siren posting a try but NHRU finished the game scoring some more well worked team tries.

Congratulations to Rowlands Colts Cup champions for 2018, Newcastle Hunter Rugby Union.

Congratulations to Matt Clayton from Far North Coast who was the Match Official for the final.

Player of the Tournament – Colts: Ben Wood, Maitland Blacks, Newcastle Hunter.

Rowlands Colts Cup final result: NHRU Colts 48 – 10 Central West

WOMENS 7's Cup Final

Hunter Women's vs Mid-North Coast

Mid-North Coast were certainly an unknown coming into the Country Championships but an fantastic performance in the semi-final landed the MNC women into the final. Hunter Women's dominance was evident from the first game on Saturday and the Hunter Women's certainly continued their dominance in the final racking up 36 – 0 victory in the final.

The Women's teams all played with tremendous spirit and skill over the past 2 days and this was exemplified in the final with Hunter's speed and contact skills at the tackle and the breakdown giving the MNC Women a lot of headaches.

Congratulations to the Hunter Women's, Women's 7's champions for 2018.

Women's Player of the tournament was Tahlia Goldsmith from Hunter Women's.

Congratulations to Nik Gaal from Newcastle Hunter who was the Match Official for the final.

Women's 7's Cup final result: Hunter Women 36 – 0 Mid-North Coast

Caldwell Cup Final – Illawarra vs Central West

The Illawarra and Central West players ran onto the field with a focussed look and this is how the game was played for the first 10 minutes. Very structured, very precise and the defence of both teams looked very solid. The hits were huge from both teams in the early exchanges and it was hard to see which team was on top. Illawarra managed a penalty goal to tick over the scoreboard IDRU 3 – 0 CWRU. Central West started to move the ball in counter attack which opened up some opportunities which Central West kept probing leading to the opening try of the game from winger Tom Green IDRU 3 – 5 CWRU.

Illawarra would hit right back with a try to their own winger Henry Yuill and before you could look up flyhalf Tom Baker got over for Illawarra's second try from a great offload from backrower Paul Tuala That took the scores to IDRU 15 – 5 CWRU with 10 minutes remaining in the first half. The game never allowed to settle down as both teams attacked the breakdown with ferocity. Central West back three were starting to get opportunities but the Illawarra cover defence were up to the challenge.

A turning point right on the stroke of half time following a breakdown penalty and a tired Central West team, Illawarra Fullback Aisake Tuevu took a quick tap and sprinted the 50 metres evading a couple of covering Blue Bulls defenders to score. The conversion was unsuccessful but the half time lead was formidable.

Half time score: IDRU 20 – 5 CWRU.

It only took a couple of minutes for Illawarra were to strike first in the second half. A double to winger Henry Yuill after a slick set piece move from the backs providing by excellent line out delivery from the Illawarra forwards, the lead extended to IDRU 25 – 5 CWRU.

Illawarra were in their groove now and they continued to dominate possession and field position. Whilst the Central West defence was gallant Illawarra built so much pressure it finally took its toll, last years Cockatoos Captain Paul Tuala scoring for Illawarra to push the score to IDRU 32 – 5 CWRU.

Central West would not go away though and kept at the Illawarra team with some clever counter attack and some set piece penalties. This led to a sin binning against Illawarra which gave Central West an attacking edge for the first time in the second half.

Central West pressed the 14 man Illawarra side for minutes inside their 22m before elusive fullback Lochie Robinson crossed the line for Central West with only 7 minutes remaining. IDR 32 – 10 CWRU. Illawarra weren't finished with though with Illawarra winger Henry Yuill would get over the line for his third try of the game and ice the win for last year's runners up. A late consolation try to Central West winger Tom Green would be a slight sweetener for a resilient Central West team.

Congratulations to the Illawarra District Rugby Union on being 2018 NSWCRU Caldwell Cup champions.

Player of the Tournament – Seniors: Mahe Fangupo, Forbes Platypi, Central West

Congratulations to Max Fulton from Mid North Coast who was the Match Official for the final.

Caldwell Cup final result: Illawarra 37 – 15 Central West

All Day 2 (Sunday) results – see below:

