

Western Pioneers Newsletter 19 June



The Pioneers crushing win over Northcote has seen them maintain their **second placing in the North Harbour Premier competition**, still four points behind leaders North Shore. With Silverdale defeating Takapuna and Massey predictably trouncing Mahurangi, the gap to the third placed teams is 4 points.

Points are: North Shore 44, **Western Pioneers 40**, Silverdale and Massey 36, Takapuna 30, and Northcote 26

East Coast Bays proved their win over the Pioneers last week was indeed a rogue result, as North Shore gave them a drubbing. They remain outside the top 6 with 21 points.

In the try scoring department, **Charlie Luteru** scored two more this week to extend his tally to 14 and **Apiu Pritchard** also scored twice to take his tally to 10. Luteru now has a four try lead from Pritchard and a few others in second place. It is a fine achievement to have both wingers at the top of the list.

The Pioneers had to play Northcote at **Stafford Park**, which is close to the Harbour Bridge near the Northcote turnoff, as their home base, Harvey Wright Park, is under turf renovation this season.

Stafford Park, like some of the devastated Eastern suburbs of Christchurch, should be declared a disaster zone, and be allowed to revert to its natural state of swamp and wetlands. It was a bog, and to try and preserve it for the Premiers game, the Senior Firsts had to play their game at Glenfield's Kaipatiki Park.

Pioneer's management were aware of the state of this park, and during the week generously offered to have the game played at Kumeu, where the ground is in pristine condition, and the changing rooms/showers alongside the field.

The offer was not surprisingly refused, as Northcote would have fancied their chances more on a field that resembled a Taranaki cow paddock. The teams then had to journey back to the changing rooms at Harvey Wright to shower and change.

Western has a loyal army of supporters each week, and they were in fine voice during this game. They were able to savour victory in the clubrooms afterwards, as they enjoyed their beers at the **reasonable price of \$5.50**. Takapuna are unlikely to be surpassed with their \$7.00 price tag, and only Silverdale still to be surveyed this season.



There is no sponsor profile this week. However just to remind you supporters who the **Western Pioneers sponsors** are so you can support them with your custom, below is the list of those businesses and individuals who have contributed over \$1000 to fund this team.

Century 21 Burmester Realty

Neville Bros Transport
Sellars and Co Lawyers
Helensville Mitre 10
F G Snell Hobsonville Optometrist
Young Dental Centre
Nik Leitch Builder
G J Gardner Homes

We hope you can come and watch the Pioneers play North Shore at Helensville on Saturday. Come along early to the clubrooms and enjoy the cheapest beer in the Union.

Bring your friends and watch the two top teams battle it out.

Both teams will lose their North Harbour representatives from now on. North Shore will lose at least three influential players whilst we are not sure who we will lose other than prop Taione Vea and flanker Malukai Ravulo.

Kick off at Helensville 2.45pm

Western Pioneers Match Report 19 June

On a warm afternoon at Stafford Park on Auckland's North Shore, the **Century 21 Burmester Realty Western Pioneers** took on the playing through North Harbour champions Northcote in heavy underfoot conditions. Earlier in the season the Pioneers defeated Northcote with a last minute dropped goal. This time however the loyal Western supporters were spared such dramatics, after their team hit the front early on and were never headed. They won 39-14, collected a bonus point for four tries and consolidated their second place position in the competition.

Compared to last week they stuck to the game plan, took any penalty chances on offer and played the game as often as they could in the Northcote half.

The game was only two minutes old, when Apiu Pritchard, still smarting after spending last week on the bench, finished off a fine opening stanza by scoring wide out. Remarkably, in such testing conditions, Regan Oxenham, restored to kicking duties, landed the conversion and the Pioneers were up 7-0.



The boggy conditions made it difficult for players from both sides to attempt any flash footwork, and as a result there was a lot of kicking and driving forward play.

A penalty to Northcote followed before Oxenham made a good break for Nalu Tuigamala to finish off and score. The kick missed and the Pioneers were up 12-3.

Northcote came back and hammered away at the Pioneers line, fancying their chances with their big forward pack. This form of play was to be repeated throughout the game by the home side, who played with as much flair as a Queen St traffic warden. They did pick up a penalty for their efforts to close the score to 12-6.

The Pioneers didn't let the conditions affect their style of play, and after a good backline move Pritchard, despite juggling the ball and doing all he could to drop it, regathered and scored under the crossbar. The conversion was a gift, and the Pioneers were in control at 19-6.

Northcote came back with their forward play, and scored from a scrum close to the line. The conversion missed and at halftime the score was 19-11.

Shortly after the break Northcote kicked a penalty to close it to 19-14 and with the welter of lineout possession they were getting, there appeared a chance of them getting in front. However their back play had as much venom as a Phil Goff political speech, and they relied solely on their forwards to do the job.

Sadly for Northcote, each of the Pioneers forwards possess a ticker the size of Phar Lap's, and they repulsed wave after wave of their forward drives, either smashing them backwards or taking their legs out from underneath them. This was encouraging to see, as defence as much as offence wins games.

Oxenham then goaled his only penalty attempt of the afternoon and after an excellent break by Nalu, Charlie Luteru was there to take his pass and score, 27-14.

By now Northcote realised that their only way they were going to get close was to forget about penalty attempts and continue to try and crash over through forward drives. They had many such opportunities as the ref whistled a merry tune. He must have dished out over 30 penalties during the game, many at the breakdown, much to the bewilderment of those on the sideline.

Again the Pioneers defence held firm, with the tight forwards in particular smacking over their opposites time and time again.

Two more tries were scored by the Pioneers, one to Phillip Tuigamala after good support play and the last one to the competition's top try scorer Luteru, after Oxenham gathered his customary intercept and fed the flying winger. The final score of 39-14 possibly didn't reflect the fact that Northcote had the majority of the possession and greater territorial advantage throughout the game. They lost because their game plan was one dimensional, the Pioneers defence was well nigh impregnable throughout and their backs seized on any opportunities.



Next week at Helensville's home ground is the game all supporters have been waiting for. The competition leaders North Shore head out west, minus their North Harbour reps, to take on the Pioneers. A win to either side won't determine the outcome of the competition, but to the victors it will be a big psychological advantage.

All Western Pioneers supporters are urged to come along and support their side and enjoy some hospitality in the club rooms afterwards.

The Senior First team had a close encounter in their game against Northcote, losing narrowly 11-5.