



Western Pioneers Newsletter May 22

The Western Pioneers are now sitting atop the competition after their big win over Glenfield on Saturday. They have 28 points, North Shore 26, Silverdale 24 and Massey 23.

The Pioneers remaining two games in this first round are against Massey next week at Moire Park, and Mahurangi at Kumeu on 4th June. A win against arch rivals Massey would as good as clinch the first round title.

It was no surprise to see the Pioneers play so well after witnessing their **Thursday night training session last week**. The second part of their training involved a full on game between the two teams. The intensity was full on, and their handling remarkable with the greasy ball.

As this was taking place it was full on in the Kumeu kitchen as Nic Leitch, Craig Abercrombie and Shane Scott prepared a meal of "Devilled Sausages" and vegetables for the players and coaches. Based on the quality of this meal, don't be surprised to see these guys open up there own restaurant in the off season!!

It was great to see a good turnout of supporters at **the member's lunch** on Saturday, including the Helensville Patron Alan Pengelly and his wife Cherry. Several of the premier players came and introduced themselves to the guests before their match, and that was much appreciated.

Wasn't it great to see veteran Helensville player **Preston Drage** come on at halftime for the Premiers, in the unaccustomed role of hooker. He had a great summer in the spelling paddock, and is slowly taking his time to lose some of that condition! Preston played well over 100 games for Helensville, and come the wet grounds, he will be in the thick of it with his strong driving play.

At the other end of the age scale, **Shane Dixon**, made his starting debut for the Prems at prop. He made an encouraging start to his Pioneers career, and it is great to see the coaches quietly introduce youngsters like Shane and **Bryce Steel** when the opportunity arises.

At the after match function we auctioned a Blues tracksuit that had been generously donated by **All Black Anthony Boric** to help raise funds for the Pioneers. After strong bidding, it was knocked down to Pioneers supporter Ross McEwan for \$500. Ross is a Kiwi currently working in Sydney and always enjoys the weekly email to supporters to keep abreast of the Western Pioneers results.

This week's **beer price survey** revealed nothing we didn't already know. Helensville's lager price is \$4.00 a bottle, possibly too good a deal! Takapuna will be hard to head off at \$7.00, but we will be interested to see what prices are like at Massey next week.



There is no sponsor's profile this week. Instead we list the personnel who help make the Western Pioneers the force they are. Everyone listed below has an important role to play, and thanks to them all for the effort they are putting in to ensure the players have every opportunity to perform at their best.

Western Pioneers Steering Committee.

Richard Kidd
Don Berry
Scott Narbey
Nic Leitch
Peter Swenson

Major Sponsor

Century 21 Burmester Realty Sponsor Liaison	Jane Burmester Rex Keane
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Premiers

Head Coach	Lindsay Ellery
Back Coach	Stu Hollier
Forward Coach	Sean Grey
Manager (Players)	John Sutton
Manager (Finance)	Shane Scott

Senior First Team

Coaches	Sa MacCarthy Toops MacCarthy
Manager	Craig Abercrombie

Physio	Rebecca Dinna
Strapper	George Milner
Water Carriers	Bill Punipi Richard Benson-Cooper
After Match Refreshments	Nic Leitch
Video	Christine Oxenham
Video Analyst	Ray Oxenham
Player Registration	Don Berry
Media Correspondent	The Villain

Programme Typesetter	Jodi Davidson
Newsletter Coordinator	Anita Eggers

Now you can see how the ABs can justify a staff of about 30.

Next Saturday at Moire Park, 1.00pm for the Senior Firsts, and 2.45pm for the game everyone has been waiting for, Massey v the Western Pioneers. Massey have been talking themselves up, now let's see if they front up. Forget their loss to Shore, they will be primed up next week, and so will be the Pioneers. **See you there!**

Western Pioneers Match Report May 22

After several weeks of procrastinating with the redesign of the Helensville scoreboard, the designers were left with a liberal dose of egg over their faces. They did not factor in the possibility that the red hot Century 21 Burmester Realty Western Pioneers would score a 100 – 8 victory over Glenfield, and thus require an extra column of numbers.

Fortunately for the young scoreboard attendant, the hundredth point did not come up until the 80th minute. He only had to hold the extra digit aloft long enough for the Fleet St journalists to photograph the occasion, before calling time for the day and heading home for a well deserved coke and crisps.



There's no real winner with a margin of 100-8. After being on the receiving end of similar score lines over the years, the Helensville and Kumeu supporters treated the big score in the Pioneers favour with a fair degree of humility. It is to be hoped that Glenfield can rally their forces and look forward to some more competitive matches this season.

Ironically Glenfield took an early 3-0 lead, as the Pioneers were slow to shift into top gear. When they did, they produced a polished display. They would be as fit as any team in the competition, the pace at which they the game is breath taking and their skill factor as good as any professional outfit.

Fou Tuivaiti, later named forward of the day, scored the first try and this was remarkably the only forward try of the 15 scored.

The Glenfield defence was mesmerised as the Pioneer's backs pulled out all their party tricks – skip passes, dummy runners, reverse passes, outrageous off loads and exquisite footwork.

Regan Oxenham deservedly won the player of the day award with a 35 point haul. This bloke is as good a first five as there is in North Harbour. He had the ball on a string, whether he was kicking for position, clearing the "red" zone with long touch finders or cross kicking for the flying Charlie Luteru to gather and score in the corner. Throw in his ability to made incisive line breaks and send out copy book passes and you can see why the Western faithful sing his praises.

Half time arrived with a score of 60-3 .



It would have been easy for the Pioneers to lose their structure and focus in the second half as some of the subs were given their opportunity to impress. Glenfield did regroup to an extent, but as with the Mississippi, the stop banks can only last for so long. They did score a try from a well executed cross kick to their winger.

The Pioneers continued to score tries at regular intervals, until with 5 minutes remaining, and sponsor Jane Burmester promising a team shout for the players if the magical three figures could be reached, they required 14 points.

Captain Nalu Tuigamala scampered through and gave Ray Alo the ball to score under the bar, 93-7. Back they came, and with time up, Luteru scored his third for the day, mid way between the posts and the sideline.

With the large crowd of passionate Western Pioneers supporters anxiously holding their breaths, Oxenham, feeling their collective weight on his shoulders, calmly caressed the ball between the posts and the scoreboard attendant felt his headache coming on.

Final score 100-8

This column has in the past been critical of the man with the whistle. On this occasion no such criticism would be warranted. Luke Prangley is to be commended for letting the game flow and the players have the opportunity to showcase their considerable skills. He was the first to admit that the pace of the game tested his fitness levels, but he will be all the better for the experience.

All that was left was to enjoy the sponsor's complimentary drinks, and catch up on the other results.

North Shore's win over Massey meant that for the first time this season Western stands alone at the top of the competition, and if they can beat Massey next week, will almost certainly take out first round honours.

Not bad for a team that has just come together this season, developed its own culture and defied the local sceptics who thought it wouldn't work. The large crowd at the game and the strong team spirit of the players are testament to the success of the venture.

Points scorers for the Western Pioneers

C Luteru 3, A Pritchard 3, R Alo 2, P Tuigamala 2,
R Oxenham 2, F Tuivaiti, G Walsh, N Tuigamala tries. Oxenham 11 conversions and 1 penalty

In the early game, the Western Pioneers defeated Glenfield 31 – 17. It was a much improved display and good to see a number of new players take the field.