



## **Welcome to this weeks Newsletter.**

A date to note in your diaries is Saturday 21 May, when the Century 21 Western Pioneers next play at Helensville. We will have a light lunch and drinks for you, our members, commencing at 1pm in the Helensville clubrooms. In addition to both Western teams playing, the Helensville Bulls and the Kaipara College 1<sup>st</sup> XV will also be playing at Helensville.

There will be raffles, and membership draws.

The Pioneers will be playing Glenfield.

Unfortunately David Raikuna was prevented from playing for the Western Pioneers last weekend due to a directive from none other than NZ Sevens coach Gordon Teitjens. He needed more time to get over an injury, so his debut will be against Silverdale on April 30.

Other injured players Ray Arlo and Tom Page should also be back on the field, along with Malukai Ravulo.

Maori Television has shown interest in filming the Helensville Club on May 28. There will be more details later if this eventuates.

## **Western Pioneers Match Report 16 April 2011**

Any perceived aura of invincibility that surrounded the Century 21 Burmester Realty Western Pioneers was shattered on Saturday at Vauxhall Park, when the home team North Shore prevailed in a tight encounter 28-13.

They can blame the slippery conditions in the first half, and the foreboding atmosphere of playing on a park where the Shelfords, Boticas, Johnstones and Cunninghams strutted their stuff. But the real cause of this defeat was the inability of those in jerseys from 1 to 8 to get their own ball at lineout and scrum time, let alone impose any dominance of their own.

Early in the game Western handed Shore's Ben Botica some easy penalty chances, which he accepted with open arms. In return Regan Oxenham kept the scores close, including one penalty from inside his own half.

Western attacked for the latter part of the first half, but a couple of poor options on attack resulted in no tries, and at half time the score was 9-6 to Shore.

After a first half when the rain fell constantly, the sun broke through as the second half commenced, and with the sun on their backs, Western found a new lease of life.

They went straight on to attack, and the backs were able to execute some enterprising play to put exciting Welsh recruit Geriant Walsh in at the corner.



This lad is proving to be a most reliable custodian, and it will only be a matter of time before the North Harbour coaches come knocking on his door.

Oxenham's excellent conversion put Western in front for the first time, 13-9, and for the Western supporters it appeared that normal transmission had resumed.

However Shore had other ideas. They went back on attack, and from a kickable penalty, opted to kick for the corner and attack from the lineout. They had the services of Blues back up lock James King who ruled supreme at lineout time. Sure enough they won the lineout and drove over. Like clockwork, Botica converted and Shore were back in front 16-13.

Inexplicably the Pioneers defence went AWOL and two more tries were leaked in through their flimsy defence and the Shore supporters adjourned to their clubrooms to savour another victory.

It was a disappointing effort by Western, but often more is learnt from a defeat than a victory. The coaching brains trust will be hard at work to rectify the areas of weakness, and they will welcome back several key members who were unable to play this weekend due to injury, plus a couple of new players to the team.

There will be no game over Easter which will enable some battered bodies extra time to recuperate.

In the early game, the Western Pioneers Senior First team scored a memorable win over their more fancied North Shore opponents, 16-15. After getting ahead on the scoreboard, they had to withstand a strong fight back by the home team who could have won if a late conversion was successful. This team is now close to the top of the table and is playing good rugby and showing good team spirit.

The next game will be at Kumeu on 30 April when they take on competition leaders and Country Shield holders Silverdale. Silverdale are currently top of the table.

What a game it promises to be.