

RUGBY AROUND THE GROUNDS

3RD XV

The OPENS 3rd team played scratchy at the start with silly errors and non-completion of phases. Costly and unnecessary turnovers saw SLC stay with us for the first 20 minutes. Credit to their forwards - they jackalled well. We eventually got into our shape, and the backs with some good set up, saw Sam Cheetham make some good line breaks off Jessie O'Neill. The wingers started to find their lines and the forwards stepped up a notch and a fine captain's lead by James O'Connor and hard running by Charlie Gribble, saw us start to build the platform territorially we needed. Others to shine were Angus Watterson, Ziggy Day and Isaac Gay.

4ths Defeated SLC 4ths 44-0

The opposition seemed stronger and applied more pressure this week, but the 4ths stayed on task and attacked for the entire 50 minutes coming out on top 8 (or 9) tries to nil. The boys have spoken of a commitment to no tries let in, so a special mention to the cover defence of Archie Forbes who busted himself to stop them on the one time they slipped us our wide. Top effort.

In attack few more dangerous than Jessie Price-Connolly, scoring three tries in the first 15 minutes. In a well-rounded performance even took some time out to discuss some Agrostology with the opposition.

On the set piece we ended the lineout careers of Braden Querido and Henry Howse, but the boys more than made up with some bustling tackle-breaking runs and both bagged a try each. We expect our lineout to be back in full operation next week.

In the lead up we challenged our centres to be more creative, and they replied with interest. The sideline nicknamed Ryan Watts 'the beast', the coach upgraded him to 'clever beast' with some smart running lines and timing. Will Collins more than once unleashed what looks to be our sharpest pass, and Joel Perkins showed a complete set of skills. Joel rounding off the scoring with some sharp finishing, and very unlucky not to be involved in another two tries.

5th XV:

The MCA 5ths/6ths/SLC 5ths had a passionate and competitive tussle on Hayden Oval on Saturday. With bragging rights on the line, both Ashgrove sides were keen to impress and cement places in a dynamic and changing 5th and 6th squad. The 5ths played SLC first in the round-robin and took it to them from the onset. Try scorers included Ollie Keen, Tom Kelleher, Liam Vanderwalt and James West, although there were also others.

Laurie's were not ready for the onslaught of the Ashgrove attack and were found wanting in their defence.

The forwards dominated the content up front, and the backs proved elusive when carrying the ball to the wingers. Special mentions for the winger who was promoted to Prop: Cooper Hafiz who will continue in the forwards for the rest of the season.

The MCA 5th vs MCA 6ths was a torrid battle up front. Spirits were high with mate-on-mate contacts ensuing.

Special mentions to the 'smiling enforcer' Lauchie Killen who was given 10 minutes to reflect on his strong tackling technique. Cadell Hendrikse also looked threatening when he had the ball, running from the breakdown.

A good hit out before the season opener has left both coaches of the 5ths and 6ths fighting over the talent. Open running rugby was shown to the spectators who had plenty to cheer for in all three encounters.

10A: 15-10 win

While creating plenty of opportunities and breaks in attack, we could not capitalise due to a lack of patience and ball control. With a high penalty count against us and SLC having the majority of possession the team defended for the majority of the match and defended strongly. There were solid performers across the field, but Ned Rosenbrock was outstanding in all aspects of his game. The team know they can elevate their game this week and are looking forward to the rematch. Hopefully, the rust from the break will disappear as we head into Round 1.

9A: 46 – 10 win

After a shaky start to the game, where the kick-off was not claimed on the full, SLC were able to apply pressure to the Ashgrove line for an extended period. As was the case in the previous trial, the Ashgrove defence was resolute and held out SLC and eventually moved the game down to the attacking end of the field. Some strong carries by the forwards allowed the side to get on the front foot and with SLC having to continually retreat, the space opened up. Some excellent heads up play, ball handling & hole-running lead to some attractive play and several tries in the first half. This style of play continued in the second half with similar results and another four tries were scored. Two highlights for me from the match were: the comment overheard after the first SLC try which was along the lines of, "Don't blame others. It happened because of our own mistakes." and secondly the positive and united show of force by the Ashgrove side after each try was scored. Well done boys, a big step forward this week.

7B:

Expectations for our final trial in preparation for the upcoming AIC Rugby season were conservative. Our opponent, Sunshine Coast Grammar were, to an extent, an unknown quantity. From the kick-off, it very quickly became apparent that we were up against a well-prepared and skilful team. The speed and physicality of the game was impressive with Grammar gradually taking control of the match by dominating the breakdown. Working as an unrelenting cohesive unit for the entire match Grammar ran out deserved winners.

However, much was learnt from yesterday's match to assist in the selection of the team for next week's AIC opener against St Laurence's College.

Of note were courageous performances of **Aidan Kock** (Right Flanker), **Ari Higginbotham** (Left Flanker), and **Ben Hawley** (Right Wing). Despite being monstered by the opposition, neither boy took a backward step - *Viriliter Age*.

At the conclusion of the game, and despite being outplayed on the day, Marist demonstrated outstanding sportsmanship in leading and delivering an enthusiastic three cheers for both Grammar and the Referee.