

Club rugby

Green Island sends warning to rival teams

ODT - Sat 23rd Mar, 2019 - Page 39

Copyright © 2019 The Otago Daily Times

Green Island 46 Dylan Nel 2, Brett Kingsbury 2, Isaak Te Hiwi, James Arscott, Sam Duncan tries; Finn Strawbridge 4 con, pen
Alhambra-Union 18 Utu Tapueluelu 2 tries; Bryn Gatland 2 pen, Levi Emery con. Halftime 22-6 .

GREEN ISLAND was barely acquainted with four-try bonus points last year. That should not be a problem this season. The Grizzlies made a tremendous start to the season at Forsyth Barr Stadium last night.

They dispatched Alhambra-Union 46-18 in a display which signalled how much of a threat they will be on a dry track. They ran in seven tries to two in a commanding performance, albeit against some frail defence.

The one-two punch of hard running Otago No 8 Dylan Nel and impressive inside back Raymond Nu'u put Green Island firmly on the front foot every time. Nel battered the ball up and bagged two tries for his troubles.

Nu'u used more finesse but route one worked just as well. He must have evaded 20-odd tackles during the course of the match. Wider out, former Otago Boys' High School outside back Isaak Te Hiwi impressed in his debut senior game.

He scored just before the break to give Green Island a 22-6 lead. He slipped a tackle and had the strength to get across the line despite the efforts of another defender. Fullback Niven Longopoa counterattacked at every opportunity and looks a good find as well.

The key to Green Island's success was the pace and width at which it played the match. Halfback James Arscott — another Otago Boys' graduate — was instrumental in the game plan as he cleans the rucks so fast.

Alhambra-Union had the better of the set pieces, particularly the scrum. The Broncos really struggled to keep up.

They will have to go back to hitting the bags so they can remember what it feels like to make a tackle. And a few extra trips around the block in their joggers cannot hurt either. Prop Alex Frood was one of Alhambra's best. He can scrum, that fellow. However, he blotted his copybook when he got a yellow card for punching just before the break.

Highlanders back-up first five-eighth Bryn Gatland left the field with a shoulder complaint after 15 minutes. Alhambra-Union really lacks organisation in his absence.