

That's More Like It: Meralomas Back in the Win Column

By Stefan Schulson

Vancouver, B.C. – This Saturday saw the Meraloma men's sides travel to the fringes of the lower mainland while the two women's sides held down the fort at Connaught Park. After an overall less than stellar showing at home a week ago, the entire club was looking to rebound with a stronger effort this weekend.

At home, the second division women solidified their position at the top of the table with a 12-10 win over United, pushing their record to 4-0. The premier women got their first win of the season, topping United by a 17-5 score. Both teams will be looking to keep this trend going next week as the seconds travel to Ridge Meadows while the premier side will be at Bayside.

The U-19 Tier II boys were in Chilliwack for the second time this season and came out with their second win, 29-21. And apparently they looked good doing it in their new uniforms.

In third division action, Delta Force were turned loose in the depths of Surrey to go Beaver hunting. As has been the case recently, the team was cobbled together during the warm-up with a mixture of Legends, U-19's, a hitchhiker and a three-legged dog, but no Chuck Norris who texted the coach an hour before kickoff to say he couldn't make it.

The Lomas got out to a good start with some quick hands out to Alex Howe who crossed the try line for his first score with the club. Surrey came right back as their #15 took a straight line through the turnstile that was the Lomas centers to even the score at 5-5. The Beavers then started to pour it on with the #15 repeating his performance just before the half to take the score to 24-8.

The second half opened with some inspired individual play from winger CJ Schoelfeld as he grubbered a loose ball forward and then got on his horse to track it down in the end zone for the try. The try sparked the team, and a quick tap yielded a second try, this time from U-19 player Steve Souconi, taking the score to 24-22. This would be as close as they got, however, as handling errors and suspect fitness regimens contributed to Surrey closing out the win. Good individual games were had by U-19 flanker Sam Hillworth, whose work-rate and lineout work stood out, and in the backs from newcomer Alex Howe who scored the opening try.

Over at South Surrey Athletic Park, the first division men were looking to atone for what can only be described as a very poor performance last weekend against the Capilanos. The pitch was in perfect condition under sunny skies, and the Lomas, featuring a line-up filled out with call-ups from the lower ranks, came out ready to play. Some nice attacking rugby from flanker Rory Hamilton got the Lomas deep into Bayside territory

where they drew a penalty. Fly-half Brian Kyrer hit the kick for a 3-0 lead that would not be relinquished.

The Lomas began to play some truly inspired rugby, making extended runs that stretched the Bayside defense to its limits. A quick pass from prop Dan Tanner out to Hamilton sent the team on a 60-yard foray that ended with #8 Aaron Akehurst crossing the try line to put the Lomas ahead 10-0. The next try featured the same combination of players moving the ball out to flanker Markus Keinhorst, who took it at full pace up the middle for the try and a 17-0 lead. The remainder of the half played out as a back and forth affair, with Bayside having the bulk of the possession but were unable to put any points on the scoreboard, trailing 20-0 at the break.

At the start of the second half, Bayside took up where they left off, controlling possession and finally getting points on the board courtesy of some missed tackles and a lengthy run from the #13. This was enough to wake the Lomas up from their halftime nap, and the team decided it was time to put the game away. A clean lineout deep in Bayside territory resulted in the ball landing in Tanner's mitts and the jolly Englishman lumbered his way across the try line for his first try of the season. The converted try took the score to 27-5, and set the wheels in motion for a Lomas whitewash. Hamilton was rewarded for his hard work with the next try, Akehurst touched down for two more scores, and Connor McKay-Dunne played Mr. Opportunity to fall on the ball in the corner for the final tally of the day. Bayside did score one more try but it was of no consequence to the result as the Lomas ran away with things 49-10. The win puts the Lomas record at 3-2 going into the bye week.

Since the start of the fall season, the Lomas premier squad has borne little resemblance to the championship team of a year ago. A steady stream of injuries and the injection of multiple new bodies into the lineup have contributed to an uneven and inconsistent start. The Saturday tilt with the Sharks would give yet another new-look lineup a shot at getting the season back on track.

The Lomas started the game strong, pinning Bayside deep in their own territory. The inevitable hands-in penalty gave flyhalf Dave Carter his first shot at goal. The successful strike put the Lomas ahead early 3-0. Bayside did not back down, and after equalizing the score with a penalty kick of their own, the Sharks capitalized on Carter's most egregious of errors, picking off the errant pass mere meters from the try line to take the lead 8-3.

The Lomas were not to be deterred, however, and moved quickly into Bayside territory right off of the kickoff. An aggressive foray, lead by second row Aidan Buan, saw the ball end up in the hands of #8 Josh Clarke who powered over the line for the try. Carter converted the kick to bring the Lomas back in front 10-8.

Bayside again showed their resilience, carrying the bulk of the possession for the remainder of the half. Their efforts eventually resulted in a drop goal to pull ahead 11-10, but this would be their last lead of the day. Off a 5-meter scrum, the Lomas moved

the ball wide to winger Shawn Mercier who crossed the line for his first try of the afternoon to put the visitors back in front 15-11 heading into the break.

The kickoff to the second half saw the Meralomas pick up right where they left off, as Mercier was again the recipient of a deft pop pass to score his second tally. With the score at 20-11, the Lomas continued to pressure the Bayside defense. Center French Kevin Heyries shot through a gap at midfield, darting ahead for 20 meter advance. As the defense caught up, he alertly waited for support, offloading to Buan who finished the run under the posts. Carter continued his good form with the boot, converting the try to push the score to 27-11.

The rest of the game was dominated by the Lomas, with the exception of a brief display of tackling futility that resulted in Bayside's only try of the half. The Lomas added tries from second row Josh Bibbs and Josh Clarke with his second score of the game to close things out at 41-21.

With a bye week coming up, the Lomas will be looking to the injured list to see who can be discharged from the infirmary in time for the November 7 regular season finale at UBC, and otherwise continue to build on the results of their season so far.