

They Came, They Saw, They Kicked Some Ass

By Stefan Schulson

Vancouver, B.C. – As rivalries go, the yearly tilt between the Meralomas and the Capilanos is one of the most anticipated on the B.C. rugby schedule, typically guaranteeing a high caliber of skilled rugby competed between two clubs steeped in pride and tradition. On Saturday, however, the entire Meraloma club was left to wonder why they got out of bed that morning as the Caps came to Connaught Park and systematically dominated all three men's division games. The only thing worse than the final scores was the weather.

In the third division contest, the Lomas had a decent first half, rucking hard and scrummaging well, but were unable to capitalize on their opportunities. The Caps went into the break up 15-6, the Lomas points coming from rookie Kevin Nielsen's two penalty kicks. In the second half, weather conditions continued to deteriorate, lending itself to some sloppy handling by both sides. The Caps were able to deal with the conditions much more capably, and put up another 22 points for a final score of 37-11. Nielsen added a second half try to round out the Lomas scoring. There were a couple of good individual efforts, notably by Chris Applebee who was roused from his slumber when he got the call to start and biked over to play a full 80 minutes, Ali "the Rockin' Moroccan" who had some good runs on the wing, and Mathieu Marque who put in a good work rate from his position on the flank.

The first division game deserves little to no discussion, except to say that the Caps dominated play in all facets of the game, except perhaps the scrums, and took it running away by a final score of 45-5. Rory Hamilton had the only try for the Lomas, and the rest of my game notes have been burned.

The elite division game represented the last hope for the Lomas to salvage something from the day, but when it rains, it pours, and there was no shelter from a Capilano side bent on making it a clean sweep on the day. The Caps got out to an early 7-0 lead on a sniping run from their #9 and never looked back. The halftime score stood at 15-3, the only Loma points coming from a Mike Hall penalty kick, as the rest of the offense got bogged down by miscommunication and ineffectual attack. Even an almost certain push over try, typically a Loma standby, was thwarted by a knock-on.

In the second half at least the rain stopped, and a hint of blue sky revealed itself. Again, the Caps dominated play, weathering all of the Lomas attack, and when opportunities presented themselves, they capitalized. The final Caps try came from yet another Loma misplay, this time off a short chip kick, to close the book on things at 22-3. While there were some good individual performances, at least in spots, the overall team play was not what the Meraloma faithful were hoping for, especially on alumni day. The only real consolation on the afternoon was that the Caps will have the harder task at the laundromat trying to get the Connaught mud out of their white jerseys.